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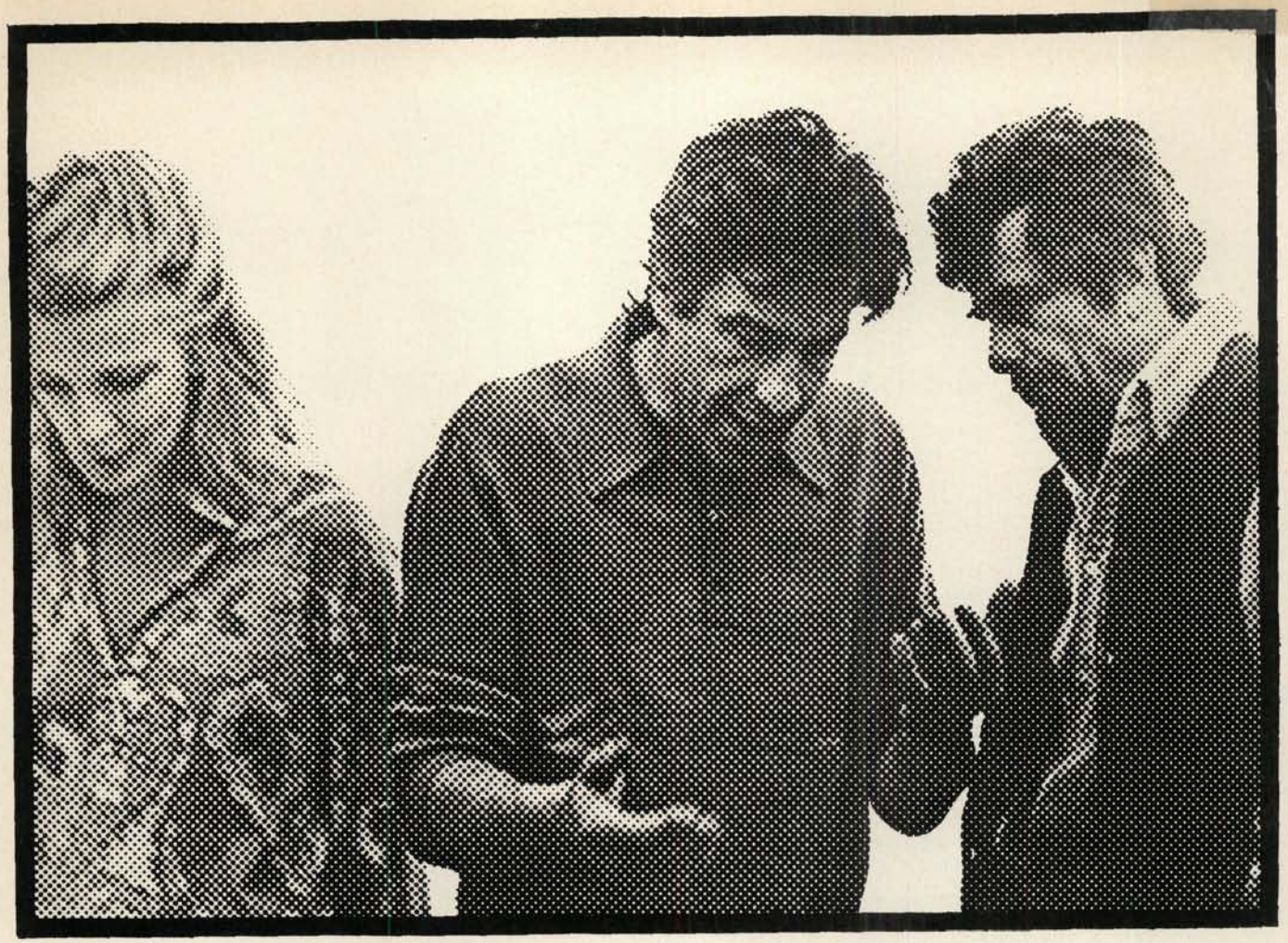

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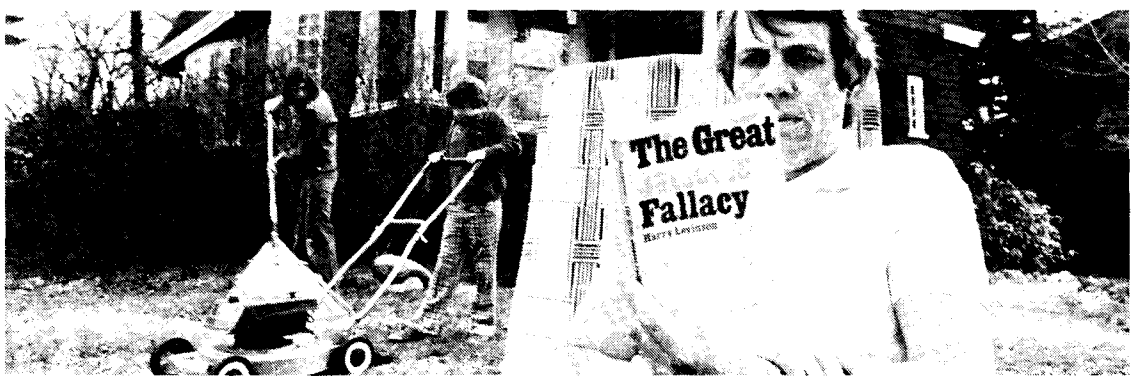

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Ramparts

Volume 13, No. 10 Aug.-Sept. 1975

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A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH

Ramparts has gone through many financial crises over the last thirteen years, but it has never cried *Wolf*! We are crying *Wolf* now.

We have been hit hard and unexpectedly. With this combined August/September issue, you have missed three issues in 1975.

On paper a profit-making corporation, Ramparts has never made a profit; the operating deficit has varied only in proportion to the size of our budget--a budget that is only a fraction of what it was in the 1960s. Periods of security have lasted for only months at a time, made possible by contributions, loans, and above all the response of our readers to early-renewal appeals.

The letter on the next page was sent to all subscribers, and it appeared in the July issue. It makes a strong financial appeal, but the appeal falls short of the actual emergency here for two reasons.

First, when it was written and mailed, we were relying on projections of income and expense that proved too optimistic. The continuing recession has affected us on many fronts. Additionally, the very length of our financial crisis and the intermittency of publishing have taken a serious toll. While missing an issue saves money in the short run, it also erodes all sources of revenue.

The second reason the appeal falls short is that the *tone* does not express the urgency that exists. Ramparts has always maintained an institutional face that is far bigger than life. Perhaps this is something inherent in the *persona* of a magazine, but it also establishes a distance between us and our readers — fostering an impression of unlimited resources, affluence, and permanence that conceals the immediacy of our needs.

We want you to know how lifesize we really are. Ramparts consists of nine men and women, staffing every department from editorial and subscription through art and production. There has not been a payroll in months, and we have even fallen behind in paying our writers and artists. Yet we were still forced to make this a combined issue.

The magazine is as small as nine people, but it is as big as the generation of commitment that made it possible. In a way, Ramparts was an accidental institution, produced by a fortuitous conjunction of money and people, issues, politics, and exposes, a vital coincidence unlikely to be repeated soon. Ramparts grew up with the movement of the Sixties, and now it stands as one of the few remaining institutions to make it into the Seventies intact and relevant.

Two and a half million dollars were invested in that process of creation. To start the same institution afresh would mean raising such sums again, having all that happen together a second time. This institution is a precious asset; it was hard won, and it would be a crime to cast it loose now.

We are moving on every front possible to raise funds, short-term and long: loans, contributions, and permanent increases in our regular revenue. We have cut our expenses to the bone to create a working budget in which income will approach expense.

But these are prospects for the future. Right now, Ramparts needs sixty thousand dollars to survive with a real lease on life. That may seem a staggering sum, but in commercial publishing terms it is modest. In terms of our circulation, it is about a dollar per reader. At this point, only our readers can save this magazine, and nothing else. We know not every reader can help, but we ask you all to do your utmost. And whatever you can do, we ask you to do it now.

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Ramparts

[AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR READERS]

May 22, 1975

Dear Reader,

A wise and knowledgeable friend of ours, who happens to be a Certified Public Accountant, recently looked at the bottom line of *Ramparts'* balance sheet and observed that the magazine was "totally impossible." We puzzled over that for a few days, and glared at the woeful balances. Dusting off the ledgers which preserved comparable figures from the past, we discovered that in fact the magazine had been impossible for quite awhile—at least for several years. But while the financial picture did not foretell our doom, it did add up to trouble.

No magazine, however loftily unburdened by the profit motive, can live on air or walk on water. At least in that respect, money talks. It need not always be obeyed, but it cannot be ignored. So this has been a time for taking stock. We needed to assess what the life signs of *Ramparts'* unorthodox survival really are, and from them how we stand.

Some of the indications could be quantified. In the last year, both newsstand and subscriber circulation ended a long decline, levelled off, and judging from the last six months have once again begun a modest rise. That in itself is an achievement, since direct mail promotion, considered to be the *sine qua non* of a stable circulation, has been far beyond our means. By industry standards, such an upturn in the readership curve is simply not supposed to happen.

This pointed to a deeper and more decisive assessment, one that cannot be quantified because it turns on the *necessity* of the role that *Ramparts* plays. The vital principle at work here is not the liberal creed, "If it is possible, it can be arranged"; it is the radical commitment that what is necessary can be achieved. So, "taking stock" has led us to examine the ways in which we measure the magazine's importance, and we would like to share with you some of the thinking we have done.

[A NECESSARY VIEWPOINT]

Frankly there have been times at *Ramparts* over the years when the sense of necessity has been elusive. We have seen how muckraking can be homogenized and mass-produced. The right kind of irreverence sells, and the quixotic charms. In the later phases of Vietnam and Watergate, a broad consensus of the American press emerged as a check on the recklessness of power. It was heartening while it lasted and so far as it went. But the press is losing some of the iconoclastic lustre that has haloed it since the Watergate revelations and the Pentagon Papers affair.

Last March, when President Ford floated his three-year aid plan to rescue the collapsing Saigon regime, we were genuinely surprised to see the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* rush to endorse his last-ditch stonewalling. Such a rejection of the most essential lessons of that entire agonizing decade must be recognized as ominous, for these are among the most sophisticated and intelligent leaders of the mainstream media. The mainstream saw Vietnam as the wrong war at the wrong time, making it easy to ignore their implied openness to other interventions, if similar ends could be more discretely or competently served.

Only a few days after we published our March issue with the cover line "Oil Grab: The War We Must Prevent," we were stunned to see the cover of *Harper's* featuring "The Case for Intervention," embellished with an illustration of U.S. shock troops parachuting onto the oil fields of Arabia. All that was missing was John Wayne leading the battalions of freedom. The article insults as well as injures history, admonishing that our "appeasement" of the oil-producing nations amounts to "another Munich." *Harper's* is a distinguished liberal journal, and we find ourselves on the same side of the fence in many controversies. But this startling reversion to the interventionist impulse is another indication that the lines of political opposition are sharpening. A resurgent radical-liberal polarization is inevitable, and signs of this are now beginning to appear.

In our May issue we focused on the danger of U.S. subversion directed at Portugal and other European states where leftward changes loom. While we were in the midst of preparing that issue, the

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Times published an astounding editorial, "Lisbon's Real Coup," which fulminated threateningly about a "Communist takeover" in Portugal. The State Department spokesperson, quoted in the *Times* pages the same day, was more candid about the nature of the menace; "This is a very dicey situation. There is this revolutianry spirit, ardor in the country." Indigenous revolutionary spirit is often very dicey. Perhaps for that reason the *Times* chose to characterize the situation as "reminiscent of some Communist takeovers in Eastern Europe after World War II." But, however one views political developments in Portugal, an occupation force of Soviet divisions is nowhere to be seen.

It is astounding what a cornucopia of Cold War rubbish a single paragraph serves up, as if the *Times* did not wish to exclude a single discredited fallacy or myth.

> *"The Soviet Embassy in Lisbon is large and active. Moscow's influence is considerable with a Communist party that was one of the few in the world that defended Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Together with renewed Communist action in Cambodia and Vietnam, and stepped-up Soviet arms shipments and other pressures in the Middle East, a Communist take-over in Portugal could not fail to bring into serious question what remains of a shaky detente."*

In this kind of Manichean imagery, details and distinctions fade into monoliths of evil. The old "Red Tide" conjured up by the *Times* magically defies the geography of Europe. The danger of Portugal's "possession" by the Kremlin is practically occult. Perhaps that is why the *Times*' fast and loose catalog of peril contains so much sleight of hand. "The Soviet Embassy in Lisbon is large and active," they warn. A Soviet Embassy, an arms shipment, or an army are treated as interchangeable initiatives. "Soviet" and "Communist" become synonymous. Amazingly, even "Communist actions in Cambodia and Vietnam" are tentacles of the same nightmare organism. The editor is apparently unable to distinguish the Portuguese army from the Khmer Rouge, and one almost expects to hear again that the Chinese Communists are really Russians in disguise.

James Reston, writing in the less reticent format of a signed column, followed up the paper's editorial the next day with a call to arms for the CIA:

> *"Foreign espionage is an essential but illegal activity . . . a form of undercover war, and the Communists are waging it with a vengeance now in Portugal, while the CIA is virtually helpless in its present condition to prevent the subversion of that strategically important country."*

Reston's examples of the CIA's "essential" efforts puts them in good perspective:

> *"The internal struggles for political control in key strategic countries such as West Germany, Italy, the Middle East, and even in Cuba often depended on providing money for guns, newspaper presses . . . and many other things which were essential to the struggle, but could not be disclosed to the general public without disclosing them to our adversaries and threatening the sources and even the lives of our agents."*

This is where the influence of viewpoint goes beyond inflammatory calls. It is bad enough when the secret aims and agents of the CIA are assumed to serve the interests of a systematically misinformed nation, but it is worse when the CIA's activities are adopted as "ours" by the press itself.

The *Times* has been as good as Reston's word. When the Pentagon Papers were published, the government argued that its potentially embarrassing secrets could not be entrusted to the media, since they were the professional expositors of the truth. The *Times* was scandalized. Their "responsibility" was a matter of record, they noted: Hadn't they lied about the Bay of Pigs?

More recently they proved themselves again. For many months they—along with the *L.A. Times* and other major news-gathering organizations—kept the lid on the story of the CIA's elaborate effort to exhume a Russian submarine sunk in the Pacific. When their account was published last February (as bona fide front-page news), the *Times* explained that the game was already up.

On what premise could the suppression of this story be explained as responsible journalism? The reasoning would have to be that, if the *Times* could help the CIA to penetrate Russian missile codes and guidance systems, the U.S. would be that much closer to neutralizing the Soviet deterrent. And, if the U.S. were close enough to first-strike capability, it would be in a position to advance foreign policies

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with less concern over the risk of nuclear war. This, it is presumed, would make the world a better and safer place to live.

This was not an isolated lapse of Fourth Estate vigilance. Renewed credulity about government activities and purpose has become quite widespread in the media, perhaps in reaction to a binge of unaccustomed exposé. Jack Anderson reported recently that:

> *"The old blather about 'responsibility' to keep secrets instead of exposing abuses has begun to creep back into press parlance. The old pre-Watergate, pre-Vietnam ideals of partnership with government, of cozy intimacy with the high and mighty, of a camaraderie of secrets shared by this peerage but kept from the public, begins to appeal once more to a press concerned that its abrasive successes have earned it a bad name and a hostile reception."*

Outright suppression comes as a particular surprise now because we have experienced the ubiquity of investigative reporting, the admixture of unauthorized leaks of truth to the usual authorized leaks of deception. But the extreme of actual suppression is a reminder of all the ways in which point of view affects the selection, emphasis, and definition of reported news. This is not to say that the record of gadfly journalism in the mainstream has not been impressive at times in the last few years. What is striking is that so much has been reported, while so little has been learned.

[A NECESSARY COMPREHENSION]

It seems that the last serious learning experience about the American system internalized by mainstream opinionmakers was in the 1930s. Unfortunately the chief moral drawn from the Great Depression was that it could never happen again. Armed with Keynes and Samuelson, the U.S. economy would burgeon indefinitely. Now, however, we are beginning to hear more or less tentative speculation about the onset of Depression once again. But willingness to utter the taboo word "Depression" is not an adequate definition of the crisis.

The premises, frameworks, definitions, catch-phrases and expertise in which the liberal experience is cloaked are threadbare from friction with the truth. Its test of objectivity is balance, while the actual problems and real solutions are extreme. The liberal press is barred from comprehension of the crisis that we face, not because its nature is deliberately suppressed, but because, even when they seek explanations with the utmost earnestness, they haven't got a clue.

A serious understanding of our economic destiny must be based on a premise even more historically audacious than that a new 1930s scale Depression is getting underway. We must realize first of all that this is not merely the periodic trough of a classic business cycle. It is not simply an economic crisis, but a crisis of the economic system.

Consider the portrait of America given by just one statistic: If you break down the horsepower of "prime movers" that American industry has produced, and place on one side the combined power capacity of all railroads, factories, farms, aircraft, and utility power plants, these all add up to just 6 percent of the national total. The remaining 94 percent has been devoted to the category "automotive," the lion's share going to the private car. If this were just an ordinary economic crisis, the pump-priming prescription would make sense—the answer would be to boost production, to return to the "ten million car year."

But clearly more of the same just means more insanity. What we are suffering from is not a mere insufficiency of production, but the glut of corrosive waste, the appalling disfigurement of our society the profit system has produced. The misuse of resources summed up in the 94 percent is so vast, so evident in the air we breathe and the immobility of transport, that we know the old prescription can't be right. It is senseless to prime a broken pump. The solution is not more, but different. And that means challenging and breaking the structure of economic power whose health is so much at odds with ours, which prospers only by patterns of production and life that are choking us to death.

[A NECESSARY ROLE]

We confess that at times we have been tempted to view the spectre of Depression primarily as an acute embarrassment to the Keynesians. But statistical abstractions and political critiques have come to life;

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Letters

[HUE MASSACRE]

Editors:

Your "Myth of the Hue Massacre" (May/June 1975) article by Herman and Porter proves once again that *Ramparts* is the only national magazine in America honestly devoted to serious journalism. Serious journalism, it should be noted, is not the same as commercial journalism or "establishment" journalism or, God help us, TV journalism. Unfortunately, for America, the journalists in the commercial trade take themselves far more seriously than they take *Ramparts.*

Roger Neville Williams
New York, N.Y.

[REPORTER IN SAIGON]

Editors:

It strikes me as a trifle ridiculous for Danny Schechter to imply in the April issue of *Ramparts* that the *Boston Globe* was duped into playing the propaganda tune for the Thieu government, or to charge that *Globe* reporter, Matthew Storin, was "inspired" by the American embassy in Saigon to attack him personally.

The *Boston Globe* was among the first newspapers to come out against the Vietnam War, an unflinching stance that cost us a berth on the first China trip by an American President. The same *Globe* editors that guided an editorial policy against the war sent Storin, a good *Globe* man, to Saigon, provided Schechter with credentials for his trip to Vietnam and ran one of his pieces.

Storin's reporting of the mortar bombing of the schoolhouse at Cai Lay was devoted primarily to the tragedy of war upon children. Agreeably, such concern should be universally felt.

Thomas Winship
Editor, *Boston Globe*
Boston, Mass.

Danny Schechter replies:

Globe editor Thomas Winship misses the point, just as most of the media missed the real story of the Vietnam war. Editorially, the *Globe* adopted most of the "right" liberal positions on the war, even if during the final hours of the Thieu regime, they flip-flopped somewhat on the question of aid. For the most part, I've admired their stance. Unhappily, the paper's coverage of the conflict never came up to the same critical standard.

Relying on wire service accounts and periodic reports by their own "Good Globe men", the paper's news columns were invariably 'tilted' towards official sources and government interpretations of the conflict's essential dynamics. As far as the *Globe* was

(Continued on page 61)

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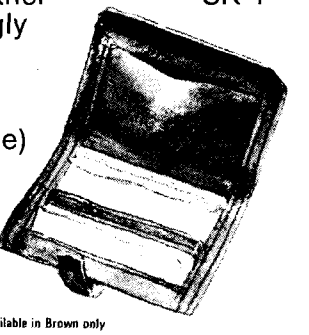

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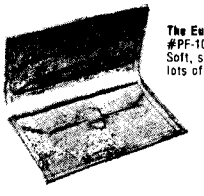

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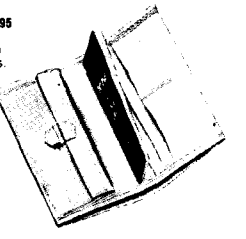

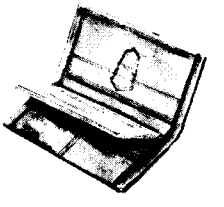

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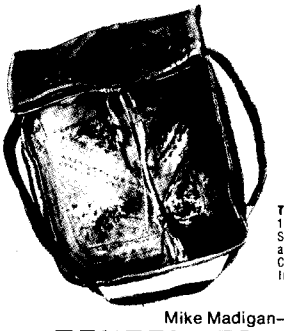

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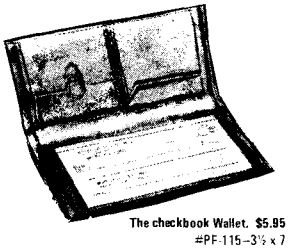

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Britain in Between

"Europe's most stable capitalist power is becoming the center of anxious attention. Savage cuts in social and welfare expenditures have already contributed to the 'Dunkirk Spirit' which is the curse of British social psychology. The lean years have begun."

George Orwell once likened Britain to "A family with all its cupboards bursting with skeletons. It has rich relations who have to be kowtowed to and poor relations who are horribly sat upon, and there is a deep conspiracy of silence about the source of the family income." Most upper and middle classes identify their own survival and prosperity with the existence of "civilization as we know it," but the British are unique in being, for once, unhypocritical. Our Establishment really *believes* that culture and civilization are dependent on its continued hegemony: perhaps that is because, unlike other and younger elites, they can decently forget where they got their money in the first place.

"As we know it" in Britain, bourgeois civilization is more or less decomposing, and there is an increasingly shrill and hysterical note to the response of our "betters." Something very like traditional class hatred is fermenting at the top, and in early May we were privileged to have a glimpse of it in microcosm. The underpaid and unorganized stablehands at the Newmarket races had the audacity to ask for more money. Their few pickets were set upon with whips and fists by a mob of well-fed racegoers

by Matthew Blaire

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and aristocrats, whose faces in the newspapers betrayed a bilious mixture of hatred – and fear. One was reminded of Lionel Trilling's comment on Eton College suits: "So elegant in conception and yet so shabby in execution." Thus the British upper crust when rattled.

They have, of course, a great deal to be scared about. At every turn, the economy shows all the distinguishing marks of stagnation and decline. The Stock Market bubbles occasionally, but nobody really associates it any more with economic activity. Inflation is nearing 25 percent and shows no sign of slowing down. Bankruptcy and liquidation, with calls for state subsidy, have come from all the best-known industrial brand-names: Rolls Royce, British Leyland, Ferranti. Foreign competition has screwed down the motor industry to the point at which it is possible to imagine a situation where no serious manufacturing activity is carried on in Britain. The external debt to foreign creditors has reached a point where five percent of every pound is borrowed from overseas. An unusually high dependence on imports, expressed as an imbalance of trade with Western Europe, has made the country especially vulnerable to the fluctuation in world trade and commodity prices. Unemployment, which will in more and more cases be permanent rather than cyclical, moves upward every month, now approaching the million mark. And the smoldering war in Northern Ireland continues to take a steady toll of lives with no sign of any result other than increased sectarian polarization.

These are the jagged points of the dilemma. They are economic for the most part, but the real crisis is a political one. The extent of confusion and bitterness among the traditional governing classes arises from the fact they they can no longer make the rudder answer the helm. Unemployment has not succeeded, as it is supposed to, in depressing Labor's demand for high wages: we have a pre-Keynesian situation of combined spare capacity and inflation.

The ten year effort to get Britain into the European Common Market has succeeded, but nobody claims any longer that it will make life any better, and only dubiously that it will stop things from getting worse. The electorate refuses to trust any major party, polls sluggishly and fitfully: voting against the incumbent administration rather than for a chosen program. In Scotland and Wales, more and more younger voters are opting for nationalist movements which demand the end of the Union and regional Parliaments with real power over finance and resources. In Scotland, where the Scottish National Party has almost swallowed the Tory vote and threatens the Labor one, the dominant issue is oil and who is to have it.

Since it was discovered over a decade ago, the oil deposit in the North Sea has looked to many people like a redeeming *deus ex oceania,* almost as if the legendary King Arthur had returned at the hour of his country's extremity. Not so. Transnational corporations were the only ones able to develop the oilfields, chiefly employing their own skilled labor and technicians. Lumpen workers are, of course, recruited locally to do the construction work or endure the hazardous life out on the rigs, but the hoped-for effect on unemployment in declining regions has been minimal. Worse, it was discovered that the British Steel Corporation had been too incompetent and undercapitalized to supply even the pipes needed to bring oil ashore; these will now be supplied from Japan. In the face of all this, the British government caved in last February and imposed a generously low rate of taxation (lower than the Norwegians) on oil company profits. The first million tons are to be exempted and the proportionate effect on profits will *decrease* as the North Sea Field is opened up. The fear that these enterprising giants of exploration would move away if offended proved too much. The era of the banana republic had arrived.

The possibility that Britain could become another Sicily, a backyard for the world market, has been raised by a series of other developments, too. The City of London may have lost a lot of its former glories, but it still remains a splendid service station for liquid "wild money." The Saudi Arabians won't keep their cash in New York, which they regard as being the capital of Israel, and the Swiss are not (yet) ready to service such short-term accounts. So London remains the receptacle for petro-dollars, ensuring that the pound and its value are dependent on any tremor of confidence among the sheikhs.

Meanwhile, the government spends more and more of its time conciliating with the Shah of Iran (grovelling is the word most often used in conversation), who is also prepared to splash his reserves about in return for technical advice and export-import deals. He is angling for an interest in British Petroleum and may even buy the Concorde if it ever gets off the ground. (One fallout of this relationship has been the exceptional harshness with which Iranian dissidents in London have been treated by the authorities. A recent token occupation of the Iranian embassy in protest against the murder of political prisoners led to the denial of bail and bringing of charges of conspiracy to trespass – a sharp contrast to the lenient treatment accorded to Ukrainian nationalists who did exactly the same thing to the Russian embassy three weeks before).

And, of course, there is the total subservience to Washington in foreign policy. The Federal Reserve deals with the pound not as a busted currency but as the totemic symbol of "an ally." Harold Lever, economic advisor to Prime Minister Wilson, boasts of the way in which he reassures Washington financial managers about the uncreditworthiness of the U.K., reminding them that Britain must be shored up as a force for stability in the West. And, true to form, British governments have been positively toadying in their support for American adventures abroad: last off the raft in Indochina and as solidly pro-Kissinger in European affairs as they dare. The relationship between Foreign Secretary James Callaghan and the exploded Secretary of State reminds one of the old gag about Harold Wilson and LBJ: "People often say my relationship with the President is tongue in cheek. It's just that I couldn't get any closer." The self-appointed task of holding the bully's coat suffered a slight reverse last August, when all the British guarantees to Cyprus under a 1960 treaty were abandoned and trampled upon to suit Kissinger's maneuvering between Ankara and Athens, with results so catastropic that even hardened Foreign Office

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men were disgusted. But the pound is the pound. Fortunately, domestic preoccupations have kept public attention off foreign affairs, and the sell-out of Cypriot independence was never a public issue.

["LAW AND ORDER"]

A similar paralysis affects political attitudes to Northern Ireland. The general view from the public bar is "we should leave the fucking Paddies alone, to slit each other's throats." But such opinions are, as yet, very casually if widely held. In Ulster itself, however, the population cannot afford to be so light-minded or so patient. Since the huge revolt of Protestant loyalists which destroyed the local administration by strike action early last year, the London government has pursued a sleep-walking policy between military repression and political horse-trading. Men imprisoned without trial are offered their freedom if their respective communities will give a guarantee of "good behavior." The army, which dare not antagonize both populations at once, is regarded in Catholic areas as an openly partisan force. A recent book on the events of last year, by Catholic leader Paddy Devlin, virtually accuses them of a politically motivated refusal to break the loyalist strike with its attendant sectarian intimidation.

An ominous slip of the tongue was made the other day by Northern Ireland Minister Merlyn Rees. The liberalism of his policies (yes, liberalism) toward the relief of detainees had been publicly attacked in a speech delivered by General Sir Frank King, officer commanding the Northern Ireland forces. "Sir Frank" said Rees in an effort to play down his mutinous rumbling "is one of the least political generals I know." Normally, the anodyne statements of Rees about "light at end of the tunnel" are passed over in scornful silence. But this piece of information crystallized all the fears about Ulster becoming, as it has in the past, a testing ground for repression. What can the other generals be like? Rumors abound concerning the political ambitions of senior officers in the province, some of whom, like Brigadier Frank Kitson, have published books envisaging an army role in "civil unrest" on the mainland. The torture of prisoners, and the development of "dirty trick" squads for counter-terror, has certainly hardened a generation of military men, who see no other route to promotion and combat experience short of involvement in Irish affairs.

But government policy exists almost disembodied from this process. They have now tried everything on their first and last colony: a reform strategy, a military crackdown strategy, an involvement with Dublin strategy, a direct rule from London strategy, and an inter-sectarian power-sharing strategy which collapsed in May with the election of an ultra-loyalist majority in the new Assembly. The distance between fiascos has shortened to almost nine months; confidence in ultimate success has fallen to sub-zero in any quarter. The fact that British armies no longer require conscription may be a saving grace, but it does not prevent soldiers on leave from voicing their disillusionment. Nor does it prevent the IRA from conducting operations in the rest of the U.K. whenever it likes, though it still observes a shaky truce at the time of writing. I may not be melodramatic to envisage a British withdrawal, leaving power to a hard-line Protestant majority upon whose policies the Republicans would have to declare war, and into which quarrel the Southern Irish government might have to intervene. At any rate it is now clear, as 700 years of history might have taught at least some Labor politicians, that there are no British solutions to Irish problems.

The recurrent paranoia generated on the Left by the Irish conflict is by no means all unjustified. Already the activities of IRA bomb squads have provided the atmosphere and the excuse for police and security officials to demand several infringements of political liberty in the rest of the U.K. The Prevention of Terrorism Act, rushed into law by Home Office Minister Roy Jenkins last December, contains sweeping powers of arrest, confinement without trial, and deportation. Special tribunals can hear evidence in secret; the accused is often not told the nature of the charges. Several people have already had nightmarish experiences and then been released without a word. Others are deported to Ireland in equal bewilderment. And traditional supporters of civil liberty are afraid to speak out for fear that they will be tarred with the "terrorist" brush. So it was all the more surprising when Lord Justice Scarman, one of the foremost lawyers and judges in the kingdom, came out with a strong call for a Bill of Rights that would prevent Parliament from infringing liberty by panic legislation. So far, his appeals have fallen on deaf ears, but they point up very clearly the weakness of the British liberal consensus.

The Irish issue has also helped pull together a motley assortment of cranks and fascists, often ex-army men or harmless country squires, but often men with records as mercenaries and killers, in a move to develop private armies of "law and order." This aspect of the panic among middle class elements, which in another incarnation has made Margaret Thatcher the leader of the Conservative Party, is worth studying. Its leaders include General Sir Walter Walker, former commander of the Northern Land Forces of NATO, and Colonel David Stirling, founder of the crack Special Air Service regiment. They busy themselves in drawing up lists of subversives, and also lists of good chaps, so that in the event of social confrontation they will be ready to supplement the regular forces. Impelled by vague feelings that "the country is on the rocks," and stirred to action by recalcitrant trade unions and militant Irishmen, they have a certain appeal to the *Wildgevorden Kleinburger,* the petty-bourgeois run amok, who find themselves ground between organized labor and the credit squeeze.

So far, they represent only a mood, and often a farcically British one, but they could turn nasty, and they bear watching. In particular, they afford cover to more sinister outfits like the National Front, a neo-Nazi group campaigning mainly against black and brown immigrants, but also developing links with extreme Protestant forces in Belfast and Scotland. (The recent murder of a black worker in Glasgow was traced to protection money collectors, ostensibly rattling the can for the Ulster Defence Association, but also carrying NF membership cards.) These elements hope that unemployment will give them a chance to blame social

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evils on the blacks, and though they are marginal so far there has been more activity of this kind than at any time since the 1930s.

["THE DUNKIRK SPIRIT"]

All of these straws in the wind, all of this crisis atmosphere, and in particular all of the current indecision of the ruling class, stems from one basic fact. They have been quite unable to restore order at the point of production. The toughest Conservative government since the war was brought down in ruins in February 1974 because of its failure to defeat a coal miners strike, and ever since that time there has been a near vacuum of policy. Labor in power fears to return to the attack; the Tories, having purged the disastrous Edward Heath, are still getting used to the more ideological and rightist Margaret Thatcher. The trade unions, meanwhile, sense their own strength and press for more and bigger wage claims to recoup inflation and taxation.

Employers are literally frantic at the failure of government to arrest this process and restore profit margins, and at the same time are bereft of solutions and unwilling to invest capital while the uncertainty persists. They are furious and resentful at the way in which bankrupt or ailing firms are taken into state ownership by the verbally left wing Tony Benn, Labor's Minister for Industry, but they are powerless either to stop it or present alternatives. And, which they fear most of all, the appetite for workers' control is growing all the time and being fed by the number of workers' cooperatives being set up in bankrupt or insolvent plants.

Almost the stock response to layoffs or closure these days is workers' occupation, a demand for government subsidy, and a re-starting of production. The Scottish edition of Sir Max Aitken's ultra-reactionary *Daily Express* has suffered this fate, to become the country's first-ever mass circulation daily paper under workers' and journalists' management. Similarly, the prestigious Standard Triumph plant at Meriden, which ran into cashflow problems making motorbikes for export, has now re-emerged as a workers co-op with a direct grant-in-aid from the government. And there are many others of varying size. The long term prospects for their survival as enterprises can't be rated very highly, but they have definitely injected a new dimension into workers' resistance, and greatly outraged the Conservative newspapers.

Lenin's classic conditions for social revolution were that the ruling class could not go on in the old way, and the oppressed classes did not wish to. So far, only the first condition has matured in Britain. The workers' movement, while strong and undefeated, is still of an extremely conservative and defensive disposition. On a few issues, like the imprisonment of pickets for conspiracy offenses, it has been prepared to strike and demonstrate over political questions against a union-backed Labor government, but even these fights are of a "don't tread on me" type.

The Left, meanwhile, is in a stagnant condition. Membership of organizations, circulation of papers and all other obvious indices of effectiveness are down. It persists in being very parochial about international affairs such as Cyprus, Ulster or Indo-China, and very conservative about questions of apparently "unorthodox" principle such as the position of women or the hardening public attitudes toward social morality. After a burst of growth under the appallingly treacherous 1964-70 Wilson administration, and the bloodily reactionary regime of Edward Heath that followed it, the Left has failed to come to terms with an ambiguously radical Labor government. A dismal isolationist campaign demanding Britain's withdrawal from the European Common Market has pulled an unhappy revolutionary left into doing fringe propaganda and leg-work for a fundamentally diversionary and often outright chauvinist movement, led by all the most opportunist elements in the Labor bureaucracy.

Unlike the United States, most left wingers in Britain belong, if they are activists, to organizations, and as a result the Left is dominated by a very intense factional life. Apart from the small and indecisive Communist Party, which has lost its Soviet faith and failed to find a revolutionary rationale, there is a choice of groups, most of the influential ones having some adherence to the Trotskyist tradition. Here and there they have made inroads and succeeded in influencing the Labor movement, but are baffled at present by the unforeseen contingency of a revival of Labor's grass roots as a party. Huge tensions exist within the coalition that makes up that Party, but only a few visionaries can imagine an outright split. Harold Wilson has engineered many showdowns with his own left wing, and may provoke another if he tries to sack the radical Tony Benn, but it is very hard to see the left-wingers quitting a party machine which confers national influence on what would otherwise be a minority splinter group.

So at the end one comes full circle. The British bourgeoisie uses its political strength to offset its economic weakness. Everybody now realizes that tomorrow will be different from today, but they conceive the change in harsh and often conservative terms of sacrifice and austerity, even of the "national interest." The savage cuts in social and welfare expenditure which have already begun will contribute, or could contribute, to exactly that "Dunkirk Spirit" which is the curse of British social psychology. The resistance to it, which is fragmentary and confused, will inevitably be characterized as selfish and sectional, and like all good propaganda, this slander will contain a particle of the truth. Life will become narrower and nastier; conservatism will be the likeliest beneficiary of the privatized and competitive responses which will follow.

The climax of Britain's political crisis could come as one writes, or it may be postponed for months, but there is now a unique convergence of tendencies all of which press towards the breakdown of the old post-war balance between parliamentary parties and the consensus of corporate labor and boardroom groups. Europe's most stable capitalist power is now set to become the center of anxious attention. The Left was right in diagnosing this, but is in a poor position to take advantage of it. We may be at the beginning of the lean years.

Matthew Blaire is a pen name for a regular contributor to the New Statesman.

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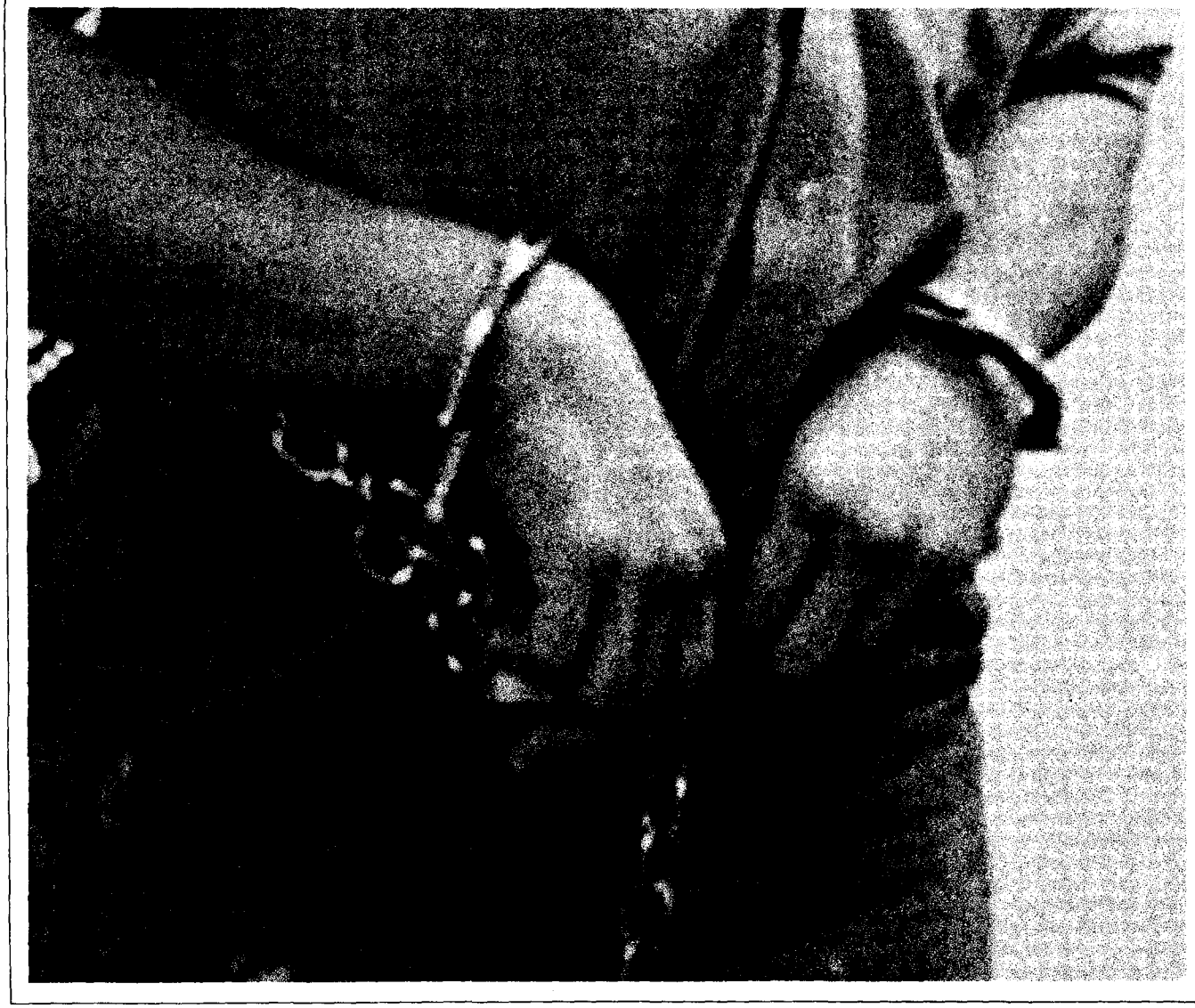
Grand Juries:



The American Inquisition

As the dust has settled from Watergate, it has become clear that the work of Nixon and his men has not been undone. One of the most shocking chapters in the history of the Nixon years must be the Justice Department's Internal Security Division (ISD) war on dissent, waged under the leadership of now convicted Watergate felons John Mitchell and Robert Mardian. Mitchell and Mardian are gone. But their favored weapon remains dangerously intact: the grand jury turned into a devastating instrument of repression. Decades of neglect of the grand jury system and the authoritarian Organized Crime Control Act of 1970, passed overwhelmingly by Congress, have given the Department of Justice awesome powers, the dimensions and implications of which have still not generally been understood. Use of the grand jury as a weapon of harassment and repression – described by Senator Edward Kennedy as "a dangerous modern form of Star Chamber secret inquisition" – has not been diminished by Watergate. The bitter irony and profound danger presented by the destruction of the Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination, and the warping of the grand jury from a protective body into its very opposite, have been buried only temporarily amidst the pomp and self-congratulatory smugness over the

by John Conyers, Jr.

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Watergate grand jury and the bringing of the Nixon gang to justice. And although the current and future administrations may find the Nixon act a hard one to follow, it is clear that the power of grand jury inquisition and harassment is being used freely by the government once again.

The Nixon Department of Justice inherited a grand jury system which had already lost much of its original character. Intended to be an independent citizens' body that would protect the innocent from unjustifiable or repressive prosecution, the grand jury was included in the Fifth Amendment by the framers of the Bill of Rights. It was meant to be independent, even mistrustful, of the prosecutor. But over the years the grand jury was increasingly cast in the role of a weapon in the war on crime – a citizens' body working hand in hand with the prosecutor. The rigid standard of independence had evaporated, and few observers would quarrel with the assertion that the grand jury had become a passive institution, in most cases doing whatever the prosecutor directed.

Yet grand jury procedure and structure are still predicated on the grand jury fulfilling independent, protective functions. Secrecy of proceedings was meant to protect a person falsely accused or called as a witness. Wide latitude in questioning would be permissible without presence of counsel since the grand jury was protecting the individual, rather than functioning as part of the prosecutorial apparatus. After all, what regulation by the courts or by the Congress would be necessary for a people's panel vigorously protecting the innocent?

Long before 1970, all that was left of independence and protection was the rhetoric, along with a dangerously unregulated grand jury process.

[FALSE IMMUNITY]

Another crucial Fifth Amendment protection has faced steady erosion along with the grand jury itself. Late in the 19th Century Federal immunity laws came into fashion. The basic concept in such a law is that the Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination ceases to apply if one is protected by immunity from prosecution – thereby stripped of the right to remain silent. A "narrow" immunity law that allowed for prosecution under some circumstances even after one was compelled to testify was ruled unconstitutional in 1892. But in 1896 a broader (transactional) immunity law was narrowly upheld for the first time over the vigorous dissents of judges who foresaw the implications of limiting the Fifth Amendment. Arguing that the Fifth Amendment was meant to protect against more than prosecution, a District Court Judge warned that "if the immunity was only against the law-inflicted pains and penalties, the government could probe the secrets of every conversation, or society, by extending compulsory pardon to one of its participants, and thus turn him into an involuntary informer."

Congress continued to enact various immunity statutes, but not until 1954 was an immunity statute passed that applied to criminal law and to grand jury and criminal court procedings. Some warned of the great dangers in the legislation, but Senator McCarran's argument that it would go "a long way . . . to help expose the Communist conspiracy in this country" was at least one factor in its passage.

Even before Nixon ascended to the Presidency, federal prosecutors had already perverted immunity from a tool to get testimony into a weapon for punishment. In 1965, for example, an alleged mobster was set up for contempt and jailed because the government, lacking enough evidence to indict him, gave him immunity in the knowledge he would refuse to testify.

With this precedent no doubt in mind, and the nation deeply troubled about organized crime, the Nixon Administration extracted from a cooperative Congress a drastic piece of legislation, which was opposed by only a small number of us in either House. The Organized Crime Control Act of 1970 authorized "use" immunity, which had been held unconstitutional since 1892. Receiving Supreme Court approval the following year, this provision allowed the government to compel a witness to testify and then still prosecute that person for the very things the forced testimony was about. The Act also allowed the government to convene Special Grand Juries at will anywhere in the country, removed discretion from District Court Judges as to whether or not an immunity order should be signed, and allowed for immunity to be ordered in virtually unrestricted circumstances (though it had been unavailable in criminal law only 17 years earlier).

[MOUNTING A CAMPAIGN]

The Internal Security Division then went to work. During the next three years it ran more than 100 grand juries in over 80 cities, subpoenaing as many as 2000 witnesses, forcing immunity on many who declined to testify. The ISD was able to convene an investigation in virtually any district, and require witnesses from anywhere in the country to appear with little or no notice, and without counsel present.

A witness often was not told the nature of the investigation and could be forced to answer literally any question about political ideas and associations, about conversations and activities of oneself, friends, neighbors, relatives, about news sources – about anything, or face up to 18 months in prison without trial. Government attorneys were free to say anything they chose to the grand jury, to threaten witnesses with the loss of their children, to read the Espionage Act to already frightened witnesses, and to have prosecutor attacks on and harassments of witnesses excluded from the record.

To cite but one illustration of common practice, one woman spent seven months in prison for refusing to answer questions including:

> *I want you to tell the grand jury what period of time during the years 1969 and 1970 you resided at 2201 Ocean Front Walk, Venice [Los Angeles], who resided there at the time you lived there, identifying all persons you have seen in or about the premises of that address, and tell the grand jury all of the conversations that were held by you or others in your presence during the time that you were at that address.*

After spending seven months in prison the witness in question was released because the grand jury had expired.

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She was subpoenaed, and the process began again.

Each of the many ISD grand juries had its own special abuses. Sometimes they were called to interfere with particular political actions, like VVAW demonstrations in Miami at the 1972 Republican National Convention. Sometimes they were used illegally to gather evidence for the trial of an already returned indictment. Sometimes they were used purely to punish or harass particular political groupings or individuals of whom the Nixon Administration did not approve.

Individuals who exercised their right not to talk to FBI agents often found themselves in a situation in which they had no right not to talk – immunized before a Federal grand jury. Because the grand jury in one place could be interlocking with other investigations, it was easy to channel and launder the fruits of illegal electronic surveillance and to maximize the hardship and isolation that a witness would undergo. It was hard for the government to lose. It could intimidate opponents, or get desired intelligence data. It could gather information for an existing prosecution, or jail recalcitrant witnesses without prosecution. It could actually indict individuals or utilize the grand jury process to help track down individuals already indicted.

[THE PATTERN RENEWED]

The ISD campaign faded as the political crisis of Watergate grew. Criticism of ISD in part led to its incorporation into the Criminal Division. But neither Watergate nor the change in leadership in the Department of Justice altered the mechanisms or the legal tools that permitted the use of the grand jury for political purposes.

There have been disturbing signs that the Department of Justice intends to use the grand jury much the same way it has been shamefully misused in the past. The Government has been searching for Susan Saxe (captured in March) and Katherine Ann Power in connection with a Boston Bank robbery and shooting death in 1970. Since March 8, four young people have been in prison in Lexington, Kentucky for refusing to testify before a specially-called grand jury; several more may be in prison in Connecticut in the same matter. In New Haven, two women, jailed for three weeks, were immediately subpoenaed to a new grand jury upon their April 1 release. They face a possible additional 18 months confinement. They appear to have been subpoenaed in the first place because they exercised their right not to talk.

The Government of course has a responsibility for apprehending law breakers, but it has no responsibility to use the grand jury as a dragnet to force citizens to talk to the FBI. Nor does it have the responsibility to harass women in the communities of New Haven and Lexington, as it seems to have done.

Immunity grants and the grand jury process are not intended to be weapons for punishment or even for tracking down fugitives. They can be effective in creating a climate of fear, and this is what the Department of Justice apparently intends.

These cases and others, including recurrent attempts to harass the "underground" press, make it clear that we cannot rely purely on the good faith of those in power not to abuse the grand jury process. Particularly disturbing, in this context, is the call by the Justice Department for a dangerous Constitutional amendment that not only would tamper with the Bill of Rights, but would give prosecutors even greater freedom to misuse grand juries. The proposals, issued last September would, if enacted, allow the prosecutor to use or bypass the grand jury process for indictment, as he or she sees fit.

The Department claims that the only reason to have the grand jury is as an investigative tool for the government. Failing to recognize any current misuse of the grand jury, the Department even states that it "does not anticipate any substantial risk of abuse if discretion is granted to permit prosecutors to make a sensible use of the grand jury."

[STOPPING IT NOW]

Many members of Congress have come to the conclusion that there will be no "sensible" use of the grand jury until major legislation is passed to reform and revitalize this once cherished institution. Twenty-four of my colleagues have joined me in co-sponsoring H.R. 2986, the Grand Jury Reform Act of 1975.

H.R. 2986 would introduce rudimentary protections and rights into the grand jury process, including the right to counsel for witnesses, minimum notice for subpoena, the requirement that a complete transcript be kept and made available to the witness. A witness would have to be told what the investigation is about and could refuse to answer questions violating Constitutional protections.

Prosecutors would be restricted in their ability to switch grand juries in the middle of an investigation. They would have the burden of proof that they are not using the grand jury to gather evidence for an already returned indictment; would have to present any exculpatory evidence they have to the grand jury; and could not force immunity on a reluctant witness – such a "grant" to be permitted only with the consent of the witness and the grand jury.

The legislation also would take important steps to restore the independence of the grand jury from the prosecutor. The judge would be required to charge the grand jury adequately. Any citizen would have the right to bring a case to the grand jury (screened by the Court). The jury would have the power to vote on immunity grants, contempt hearing requests and subpoenas (this last power being one it already is supposed to have), and could engage in independent inquiry into crimes by government officials with independent court-appointed counsel.

The grand jury is a people's institution that has been taken away and used to subvert the very rights it was intended to protect. While it may be difficult to realize the goal of completely returning the grand jury to its original role as a shield for the innocent, we must at least recast the law to insure that the repugnant inquisitions of recent years are brought permanently to an end.

John Conyers, Jr. (Dem.-Michigan), a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, has been in Congress since 1964.

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Militarism, Ideology and Poverty

"Had no military expenditures been made by nations after the communist victory in China in 1949, the world's realizable wealth (including housing, productive facilities, transportation, power) would now be at least 50% greater. And mankind's generalized poverty could have been conquered."

The concept of the United Nations, that five Great Powers – the U.S., England, France, Russia and China – would collectively rule the world as Permanent Members of the Security Council, in concert and in some undefined manner, was preposterous at the outset. What it meant, in effect, was that 38 percent of the people of the Earth, inhabiting 28 percent of the world's land area, would make all ultimate decisions for the whole of mankind. Sixty-two percent of humanity would be effectively disfranchised in world affairs; 72 percent of the world's land area would be controlled from outside its own boundaries.

With the decision to exclude Mainland China from the U.N., and the granting of veto power to the Chiang Kai-shek regime based on Taiwan, a further 22 percent of the world's people was denied a voice in concerted world action. Thenceforth, the population of 22 percent of the world's surface would decide what must be done, in the global sense, by the population of the remaining 78 percent of the world's land area. Some 16-17 percent of the world's people would decide the national limits of action of the remaining 83 percent of mankind.

That the situation was absurd is shown by the initial assumption that unanimity could be secured through the veto power. The veto power enjoyed by Permanent Members of the Security Council was, instead, a further narrowing of the decision-making process. It had been written into the Constitution of the U.N. at American insistence – at the insistence of Alger Hiss, in fact. Any one of the five Permanent Members of the Council could prevent united action by the U.N. through exercise of the veto. With permanent membership in the Council granted to Taiwan, the veto power of Taiwan meant that the U.N. could not function in unanimity unless the People's Republic of China were excluded from any say whatever in world matters. In *realpolitik* this would require that the U.S.S.R. acquiesce in clearly intended U.S. actions in the Far East and that the U.S. acquiesce in Russian actions with respect to Eastern Europe.

Therefore, the necessary precondition for unanimity among Permanent Members of the Security Council was that the Soviet Union share with the United States and the United Kingdom avowed hostility to the factual existence, and the possible spread, of communism in the Far East. Exclusion of Mainland China from the U.N. postulated this as necessary for unanimity in the Security Council.

Russian hostility to communism in China being impossible, it followed that unanimity in the Security Council was also impossible except over relatively trivial issues. And the same held

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true over Anglo-American attitudes towards the Russian presence in Eastern Europe.

Effectively, the U.N. was sterilized. It could not perform meaningfully unless it acted in union. The necessary unanimity, however, would have required Russian assistance in the suppression of communism in the Orient, and Anglo-American assistance in the fostering of communism in Europe.

Neither could occur. Therefore, the U.N. could not function, in any ultimate sense, as an organ of world governance. It could not but degenerate into what it became: an arena in which Great Powers strove to manipulate affairs to their own advantage (real or fancied), to the gross disadvantage of their opponents (real or fancied.)

What might have happened, in and to the world, had there been no veto power in the U.N. – or, for that matter, had the United Nations not been established at all – is a matter for conjecture. It could possibly be argued that the ordinary courses of diplomacy would have been more effective deterrents to aggressive actions by nations, and more competent in securing accommodation between potential antagonists, than a world deliberative body whose structure and constitution contradicted its own avowed purposes.

The argument cannot be dismissed out of hand that the U.N. has actually exacerbated national antagonisms – and without the slightest intention of doing so. One of the intended functions of the U.N. was to serve as an early warning system bringing growing national antagonisms into the open so that they could be pondered and, perhaps, offset in some fashion. Unfortunately, this enhanced visibility of national and ideological antagonisms has served more to exaggerate than to diminish them by inflaming public opinion in the member states. Vitriolic rhetoric became characteristic of debate in the General Assembly, and grew to be specifically intended to excite national publics, and to foment alarm among member states.

Does this mean that a world deliberative body should not exist? Of course not. Ironically, however, it would seem that such a body can prove effective *only* if it starts out within a set of world relations equivalent to those which it intends to bring into being. A world deliberative body founded upon national or ideological antagonisms can only serve to aggravate them. Functionally, an effective United Nations can succeed only in the absence of persisting serious discords among nations. This – its ultimate objective – is also its required starting point. In a certain sense, the theory can be advanced that success of a world policymaking organ must of necessity be a function of the paucity of need for its existence.

[ARSENAL OF FUTILITY]

The truth of this paradox is driven home by the fact that despite existence of the U.N., during the eight years from 1964 through 1971, world military expenditures approximated $1.2 *trillion*, of which some 88 percent was spent by developed countries and 53 percent by NATO countries alone. The Warsaw Pact countries during these years spent militarily

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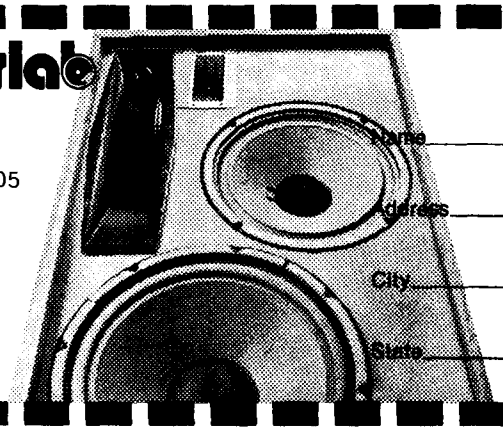

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some $431 billion, one-third of total military expenditures of the world. The U.S. spent close to $510 billion or 39 percent of the world total. Even the developing countries spent close to $160 billion, almost one-eighth of the world total. On the Vietnam War alone, the U.S. spent $140-150 billion directly, in addition to the immeasurable indirect cost involved in wrecking its domestic economy, the foreign exchange value of its currency, and its foreign trade. An additional $360 billion was spent by the U.S., domestically and abroad, not only in actual defense of the nation against invasion, but in attempts overseas to shore up the U.S. geopolitical position: attempts which have manifestly failed.

Hence, in the United States and throughout the world, the sudden plunging of developed countries into poverty and economic chaos. The coming chaos first expressed itself internationally in 1971 when the U.S., unable in any other way to stem the hemorrhage of its gold reserves induced by military expenditures of more than half-a-trillion dollars in eight years, embargoed any further gold payments by the U.S., even to foreign central banks. But it had already expressed itself domestically in the U.S. in 1969-70 when its military extravagance in Southeast Asia proved to be, not the cost-free exercise which Lyndon Johnson in 1967 assured the nation it was, but so vast a consumption of the nation's past and current savings as to strip even the private sectors of the U.S. economy of the capital needed not only to expand but to meet current bills.

In earlier issues of RAMPARTS I have stressed how international faith in the dollar was destroyed by the unpardonably large military spending of this country, and how in 1973 Europe closed itself against unwanted dollar infusions. What is not yet appreciated by the American public, however, is that total U.S. defense budgets during 1946-75 ($1.5 trillion) approximated two-thirds of the value of *all reproducible real assets,* public and private, in the United States as estimated for 1968 ($2.36 trillion).

Definitional differences and difficulties make comparable estimates for other nations hazardous. It remains a fact, however, that had no military expenditures been made by nations after the communist victory in China, the realizable wealth of the world (in the form of housing, hospitals, schools and universities, productive facilities, developed infrastructures including electric power and transportation, plus agricultural potential) would have been at least 50 percent higher than it is today.

Poverty, in the sense of semi-starvation, might still have existed. If so, it would have been in isolated instances and, more often than not, because of special local circumstances. But poverty, in the generalized sense which most of mankind today experiences, could have been conquered without great difficulty.

The barrier to the conquest of world poverty is not an excess of population over potential means of subsistence but the displayed preference of peoples to spend on arms what should be spent on the short-range welfare and the long-range productive capacity of mankind.

Military spending, and more specifically military actions, make this impossible. The latter not only diverts capital, labor, and material resources from productive employment but destroys – willfully and deliberately – whatever resources of a chosen enemy it is able to demolish. The former, propagandized to the people as the first line of defense of their way of life, nowadays renders preservation of such a way of life unlikely.

The reality is that militarism and sustenance are now incompatible. Disregarding the possible annihilation of mankind by nuclear weapons, even "conventional" weapons are now so costly that quantitative sufficiency to *guarantee* the defense of even Great Powers against attack is beyond the capacity of the public purse.

We have reached the point that what the military call national security is a function of decreasing marginal superiority of one nation's arms over another's. And as the marginal value (measured in kill power) grows smaller and smaller, the cost of maintaining the margin in one nation's favor grows at an exponential rate. The unit cost of non-nuclear weapons tends to rise without limit, and this limitless cost increase gains smaller and smaller advantage over an adversary, the growth in military technology being approximately uniform – except for brief time spans of possessed advantage – in all technically advanced nations.

Consequently, something very strange appears to be in the making. Assume the trends in military technology and associated marginal costs to continue without interruption, we shall soon reach the stage at which vanishingly small advantages over an enemy involve infinitely large increases in cost per unit of advantage. And before that point is reached, the entire society must be reorganized in order to ensure that personal consumption does not continue at a level which would debar the military from attaining ever smaller advantages, or from translating these diminishing advantages into massive quantities – and costs – of actual arms which grow obsolescent in their very production.

[THE REAL CONVERGENCE]

Military developments and domestic tranquility are thus becoming antithetical. This is

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as true of the U.S.S.R. as of the United States. The arms race has become a continuous series of ever more costly technical changes in weapons, to the point that neither capitalism nor socialism can afford to give primary attention to the daily needs – not to say the personal wishes – of the populace.

The consequence is that militarized capitalism and militarized socialism are becoming functional identities.

From the socialist side, it is not during a revolution that a system approaches identity with militarized capitalism. It is after success of the revolution that this progression is set in train, because every attempt at socialist revolution is countered by military action of the leading capitalist power, and this countering continues long after the revolution has reached its goal. The result is that, although the revolutionary goal of attaining power is reached, preservation of the revolution requires increased, not decreased, deployment of social resources towards military purposes, diminishing the social values of the revolution.

On the capitalist side, the mere attempt at revolution abroad involves not only intervention to suppress the revolution but, in addition, magnification of military preparedness should the revolution not be suppressed.

The entire world thus becomes a vortex of military preparedness and expenditures, increasing in velocity and dimension until all mankind is caught up in it, socialist and capitalist alike.

National armaments are becoming supranatural, the world's nations subordinated not to their military leaders but to their military technologies and corresponding budget appropriations. Preparations for war, in their financial-technical aspects, take on a life of their own even when war is not intended. As military technology in any one nation advances, it becomes essential that the latest advance be rendered obsolete in the shortest possible span of time. For it is assumed that what one nation has already achieved, other nations will soon achieve. And the approach to limitless military budgets throughout the world grows clearer day by day.

I hesitate to term this the quandary of mankind. For it to be truly a quandry, it must be motivated by inevitability. And inevitability in this process is *not* inevitable.

Mankind can still choose whether the process shall continue. But nations cannot (or believe they cannot) unilaterally halt this process on their own account. They cannot (or believe they cannot) permit nations considered hostile (and perhaps, in fact, hostile) to outstrip them in non-nuclear military capability. And so the arms race not only continues but accelerates. Mankind so far has rejected its free choice to halt this insanity.

In one respect, the process is more ridiculous than tragic. It has been demonstrated in Indochina, as in Portuguese Africa and – long before – in Yugoslavia and the Balkans generally, that the more sophisticated the weapons of powerful nations, the less capable they are of suppressing guerrilla insurgency employing primitive weapons. Has the world forgotten that the NLF in Vietnam was predominantly armed, in its early stages, with crossbows, sharpened bamboo stakes, the equivalent of zip-guns? And that with such weapons they held back, and frequently defeated, the heavily-armed forces of South Vietnam? Or that the Yugoslav partisans, without the panoply of arms which the Axis powers possessed, pinned down more than 40 Axis divisions at the height of the Balkan fighting in 1943?

The world had better not forget this, for most of the Earth's surface is hospitable to guerrilla activities. To put it another way, the extraordinarily sophisticated weapons of advanced industrial states are simply inapplicable to the very areas in which, logic dictates, they are most likely to be employed. The very advance in military technology *decreases* military capabilities in relation to most of the Earth.

Progressive rise in costs of militarism not only negates the social systems they are intended to defend (capitalist or socialist) but also, in the concrete forms it assumes as weapons and strategy, decreases the geographical areas in which advanced weapons can be employed effectively. As marginal military cost tends to infinity, the extent to which the resulting weapons can be employed with intended effect tends towards zero.

I address these remarks as much to military men as to the public at large, as much to socialist societies as to capitalist or mixed economies. In my life, I have met and known many military men, from generals and admirals to privates and *matelots*. I have found as much personal honor and dedication among them as in any other stratum or profession in society. Their social concern, however, is of necessity limited by their requirement to obey without question – which is not characteristic of the general public in non-dictatorial societies. Yet they are amenable to reason. And perhaps the shortest cut towards ending the arms race, especially in its technical aspects, is to demonstrate to the military how utterly self-defeating their honestly motivated activities are becoming.

To the public at large (including legislators), what as yet is only vaguely apprehended by a few needs to be transformed into full and general recognition. However wealthy, no nation can afford to deploy today's most advanced military technology, even if it is never used. No social system can fund tomorrow's military technology without radical transformation of the social structure such that the military must play a political role which the average military officer himself finds repugnant.

If all nations attain something close to equality in military technology and capability, and if each strives to "improve" upon it, the resulting changes in social forms throughout the world will make it impossible to distinguish politically any nation from any other. The objectives sought in military superiority will vanish in the total dominance of militarism over all else. And the industrial necessities of such a situation will leave neither room nor role for a supposedly civilian population, except as servitors.

This is the choice which mankind must make – and soon. To continue the arms race, and to make it militarily meaningless by its continuance. Or to turn its swords into plowshares, and to abandon a military process which jeopardizes the very existence of civil society even if its weapons remain unused. Then, and only then, can mankind create a United Nations which will actually unite humanity.

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How Poverty Breeds Overpopulation

(and not the other way around)

The world population problem is a bewildering mixture of the simple and the complex, the clear and the confused.

What is relatively simple and clear is that the population of the world is getting larger, and that this process cannot go on indefinitely because there are, after all, limits to the resources, such as food, that are needed to sustain human life. Like all living things, people have an inherent tendency to multiply geometrically—that is, the more people there are the more people they tend to produce. In contrast, the supply of food rises more slowly, for unlike people it does not increase in proportion to the existing rate of food production. This is, of course, the familiar Malthusian relationship and leads to the conclusion that the population is certain eventually to outgrow the food supply (and other needed resources), leading to famine and mass death unless some other countervailing force intervenes to limit population growth. One can argue about the details, but taken as a general summary of the population problem, the foregoing statement is one which no environmentalist can successfully dispute.

When we turn from merely stating the problem to analyzing and attempting to solve it, the issue becomes much more complex. The simple statement that there is a limit to the growth of the human population, imposed on it by the inherent limits of the earth's resources, is a useful but abstract idea. In order to reduce it to the level of reality in which the problem must be solved, what is required is that we find the *cause* of the discrepancy between population growth and the available resources. Current views on this question are neither simple nor unanimous.

One view is that the cause of the population problem

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is uncontrolled fertility, the countervailing force—the death rate—having been weakened by medical advances. According to this view, given the freedom to do so people will inevitably produce children faster than the goods needed to support them. It follows, then, that the birthrate must be deliberately reduced to the point of "zero population growth".

The methods that have been proposed to achieve this kind of direct reduction in birthrate vary considerably. Among the ones advanced in the past are: (a) providing people with effective contraception and access to abortion facilities and with education about the value of using them (i.e., family planning); (b) enforcing legal means to prevent couples from producing more than some standard number of children ("coercion"); (c) withholding of food from the people of starving developing countries which, having failed to limit their birthrate sufficiently, are deemed to be too far gone or too unworthy to be saved (the so-called "lifeboat ethic").

It is appropriate here to illustrate these diverse approaches with examples. The family planning approach is so well known as to need no further exemplification. As to the second of these approaches, one might cite the following description of it by Kingsley Davis, a prominent demographer, which is quoted approvingly in a recent statement by "The Environmental Fund" that is directed against the family planning position: "If people want to control population, it can be done with knowledge already available ... For instance, a nation seeking to stabilize its population could shut off immigration and permit each couple a maximum of two children, with possible license for a third. Accidental pregnancies beyond the limit would be interrupted by abortion. If a third child were born without a license, or a fourth, the mother would be sterilized." (Quoted from the Environmental Fund's Statement "Declaration on Population and Food"; original in *Daedalus*, Fall, 1973).

The author of the "lifeboat ethic" is Garrett Hardin, who stated in a recent paper (presented in San Francisco at the 1974 annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science) that: "So long as nations multiply at different rates, survival requires that we adopt the ethic of the lifeboat. A lifeboat can hold only so many people. There are more than two billion wretched people in the world—ten times as many as in the United States. It is literally beyond our ability to save them all . . . Both international granaries and lax immigration policies must be rejected if we are to save something for our grandchildren."

Actually, this recent statement only cloaks, in the rubric of an "ethic," a more frankly political position taken earlier by Hardin: "Every day we [i.e., Americans] are a smaller minority. We are increasing at only one percent a year; the rest of the world increases twice as fast. By the year 2000, one person in 24 will be an American; in one hundred years only one in 46 . . . If the world is one great commons, in which all food is shared equally, then we are lost. Those who breed faster will replace the rest ... In the absence of breeding control a policy of 'one mouth one meal' ultimately produces one totally miserable world. In a less than perfect world, the allocation of rights based on territory must be defended if a ruinous breeding race is to be avoided. It is unlikely that civilization and dignity can survive everywhere; but better in a few places than in none. Fortunate minorities must act as the trustees of a civilization that is threatened by uninformed good intentions." (*Science*, Vol. 172, p. 1297; 1971).

[THE QUALITY OF LIFE]

But there is another view of population which is much more complex. It is based on the evidence, amassed by demographers, that the birthrate is not only affected by biological factors, such as fertility and contraception, but by equally powerful *social* factors.

Demographers have delineated a complex network of interactions among these social factors. This shows that population growth is not the consequence of a simple arithmetic relationship between birthrate and death rate. Instead, there are circular relationships in which, as in an ecological cycle, every step is connected to several others.

Thus, while a reduced death rate does, of course, increase the rate of population growth, it can also have the opposite effect—since families usually respond to a reduced rate of infant mortality by opting for fewer children. This negative feedback modulates the effect of a decreased death rate on population size. Similarly, although a rising population increases the demand on resources and thereby worsens the population problem, it also stimulates economic activity. This, in turn, improves educational levels. As a result the average age at marriage tends to increase, culminating in a reduced birthrate—which mitigates the pressure on resources.

In these processes, there is a powerful social force which, paradoxically, both reduces the death rate (and thereby stimulates population growth) and also leads people voluntarily to restrict the production of children (and thereby reduces population growth). That force, simply stated, is the quality of life—a high standard of living, a sense of well-being and of security in the future. When and how the two opposite effects of this force are felt differs with the stages in a country's economic development. In a pre-modern society, such as England before the industrial revolution or India before the advent of the English, both death rates and birthrates were high. But they were in balance and population size was stable. Then, as agricultural and industrial production began to increase and living conditions improved, the death rate began to fall. With the birthrate remaining high the population rapidly increased in size. However, later, as living standards continued to improve, the decline in death rate persisted but the birthrate began to decline as well, reducing the rate of population growth.

For example, at around 1800, Sweden had a high birthrate (about 33/1000), but since the death rate was equally high, the population was in balance. Then as agriculture and, later, industrial production advanced, the death rate dropped until, by the mid-nineteenth century, it stood at about 20/1000. Since the birthrate remained constant during that period of time, there was a large

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excess of births over deaths and the population increased rapidly. Then, however, the birthrate began to drop, gradually narrowing the gap until in the mid-twentieth century it reached about 14/1000, when the death rate was about 10/1000.* Thus, under the influence of a constantly rising standard of living the population moved, with time, from a position of balance *at a high death rate* to a new position of near-balance *at a low death rate*. But in between the population increased considerably.

This process, *the demographic transition*, is clearly characteristic of all western countries. In most of them, the birthrate does not begin to fall appreciably until the death rate is reduced below about 20/1000. However, then the drop in birthrate is rapid. A similar transition also appears to be under way in countries like India. Thus in the mid-nineteenth century, India had equally high birth and death rates (about 50/1000) and the population was in approximate balance. Then, as living standards improved, the death rate dropped to its present level of about 15/1000 and the birthrate dropped, at first slowly and recently more rapidly, to its present level of 42/1000. India is at a critical point; now that death rate has reached the turning point of about 20/1000, we can expect the birthrate to fall rapidly—provided that the death rate is further reduced by improved living conditions.

One indicator of the quality of life—infant mortality—is especially decisive in this process. And again there is a critical point—a rate of infant mortality below which birthrate begins to drop sharply and, approaching the death rate, creates the conditions for a balanced population. The reason is that couples are interested in the number of *surviving* children and respond to a low rate of infant mortality by realizing that they no longer need to have more children to replace the ones that die. Birth control is, of course, a necessary adjunct to this process; but it can succeed—barring compulsion—only in the presence of a rising standard of living, which of itself generates the necessary motivation.

This process appears to be just as characteristic of developing countries as of developed ones. This can be seen by plotting the present birthrates against the present rates of infant mortality for all available national data. The highest rates of infant mortality are in African countries; they are in the range of 53-175/1000 live births and birthrates are about 27-52/1000. In those countries where infant mortality has improved somewhat (for example, in a number of Latin American and Asian countries) the drop in birthrate is slight (to about 45/1000) until the infant mortality reaches about 80/1000. Then, as infant mortality drops from 80/1000 to about 25/1000 (the figure characteristic of most developed countries), the birthrate drops sharply from 45 to about 15-18/1000. Thus a rate of infant mortality of 80/1000 is a critical turning point which can lead to a very rapid decline in birthrate in response to a further reduction in infant mortality. The latter, in turn, is always very responsive to improved living conditions, especially with respect to nutrition. Consequently, there is a kind of critical standard of living which, if achieved, can lead to a rapid reduction in birthrate and an approach to a balanced population.

Thus, in human societies, there is a built-in control on population size: If the standard of living, which initiates the rise in population, *continues* to increase, the population eventually begins to level off. This self-regulating process begins with a population in balance, but at a high death rate and low standard of living. It then progresses toward a population which is larger, but once more in balance, at a low death rate and a high standard of living.

[DEMOGRAPHIC PARASITES]

The chief reason for the rapid rise in population in developing countries is that this basic condition has not been met. The explanation is a fact about developing countries which is often forgotten—that they were recently, and in the economic sense often still remain, colonies of more developed countries. In the colonial period, western nations introduced improved living conditions (roads, communications, engineering, agricultural and medical services) as part of their campaign to increase the labor force needed to exploit the colony's natural resources. This increase in living standards initiated the first phase of the demographic transition.

But most of the resultant wealth did not remain in the colony. As a result, the second (or population-balancing) phase of the demographic transition could not take place. Instead the wealth produced in the colony was largely diverted to the advanced nation—where it helped *that* country achieve for itself the second phase of the demographic transition. Thus colonialism involves a kind of demographic parasitism: The second, population-balancing phase of the demographic transition in the advanced country is fed by the suppression of that same phase in the colony.

It has long been known that the accelerating curve of wealth and power of Western Europe, and later of the United States and Japan, has been heavily based on exploitation of resources taken from the less powerful nations: colonies, whether governed legally, or—as in the case of the U.S. control of certain Latin American countries—by extra-legal and economic means. The result has been a grossly inequitable rate of development among the nations of the world. As the wealth of the exploited nations was diverted to the more powerful ones, their power, and with it their capacity to exploit, increased. The gap between the wealth of nations grew, as the rich were fed by the poor.

What is evident from the above considerations is that this process of international exploitation has had another very powerful but unanticipated effect: rapid growth of the population in the former colonies. An analysis by the demographer, Nathan Keyfitz, leads him to conclude that the growth of industrial capitalism in the western nations in the period 1800-1950 resulted in the development of a one-billion excess in the world population, largely in the tropics. Thus the present world population crisis—the rapid growth of population in developing countries (the

* This and subsequent demographic information is from: Agency for International Development, *Population Program Assistance*, December, 1971)

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"There is a demonstrable way to control the growth of population in developing countries. It is to let them develop—to achieve the quality of life that everywhere in the world is the *real* motivation for a balanced population."

former colonies)—is the result not so much of policies promulgated by these countries but of a policy, colonial exploitation, forced on them by developed countries.

[A VILLAGE IN INDIA]

Given this background, what can be said about the various alternative methods of achieving a balanced world population? In India, there has been an interesting, if partially inadvertent, comparative test of two of the possible approaches: family planning programs and efforts (also on a family basis), to elevate the living standard. The results of this test show that while the family planning effort itself failed to reduce the birthrate, improved living standards succeeded.

In 1954, a Harvard team undertook the first major field study of birth control in India. The population of a number of test villages was provided with contraceptives and suitable educational programs; birthrates, death rates and health status in this population were compared with the comparable values in an equivalent population in control villages. The study covered the six-year period 1954-1960.

A follow-up in 1969 showed that the study was a failure. Although in the test population the crude birthrate dropped from 40 per 1,000 in 1957 to 35 per 1,000 in 1968, a similar reduction also occurred in the control population. The birth control effort had no measurable effect on birthrate.

We now know *why* the study failed, thanks to a remarkable book by Mahmood Mamdani (*The Myth of Population Control*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1972). He investigated in detail the impact of the study on one of the test villages, Manupur. What Mamdani discovered is a total confirmation of the view that population control in a country like India depends on the economically-motivated desire to limit fertility. Talking with the Manupur villagers he discovered why, despite the study's statistics regarding ready "acceptance" of the offered contraceptives, the birthrate was not affected:

"One such 'acceptance' case was Asa Singh, a sometime land laborer who is now a watchman at the village high school. I questioned him as to whether he used the tablets or not: 'Certainly I did. You can read it in their books—From 1957 to 1960, I never failed.' Asa Singh, however, had a son who had been born sometime in 'late 1958 or 1959.' At our third meeting I pointed this out to him . . . Finally he looked at me and responded. 'Babuji, someday you'll understand. It is sometimes better to lie. It stops you from hurting people, does no harm, and might even help them.' The next day Asa Singh took me to a friend's house . . . and I saw small rectangular boxes and bottles, one piled on top of the other, all arranged as a tiny sculpture in a corner of the room. This man had made a sculpture of birth control devices. Asa Singh said: 'Most of us threw the tablets away. But my brother here, he makes use of everything.' "

Such stories have been reported before and are often taken to indicate how much "ignorance" has to be overcome before birth control can be effective in countries like India. But Mamdani takes us much further into the problem, by finding out why the villagers preferred not to use the contraceptives. In one interview after another he discovered a simple, decisive fact: that in order to advance their economic condition, to take advantage of the opportunities newly created by the development of independent India, *children were essential.* Mamdani makes this very explicit:

"To begin with, most families have either little or no savings, and they can earn too little to be able to finance the education of *any* children, even through high school. Another source of income must be found, and the only solution is, as one tailor told me, 'to have enough children so that there are at least three or four sons in the family.' Then each son can finish high school by spending part of the afternoon working . . . After high school, one son is sent on to college while the others work to save and pay the necessary fees . . . Once his education is completed, he will use his increased earnings to put his brother through college. He will not marry

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until the second brother has finished his college education and can carry the burden of educating the third brother ... What is of interest is that, as the Khanna Study pointed out, it was the rise in the age of marriage–from 17.5 years in 1956 to 20 in 1969–and not the birth control program that was responsible for the decrease in the birthrate in the village from 40 per 1,000 in 1957 to 35 per 1,000 in 1968. While the birth control program was a failure. the net result of the technological and social change in Manupur was to bring down the birth rate."

Here, then, in the simple realities of the village of Manupur are the principles of the demographic transition at work. There *is* a way to control the rapid growth of populations in developing countries. It is to help them develop–and more rapidly achieve the level of welfare that everywhere in the world is the real motivation for a balanced population.

[ENOUGH TO GO AROUND]

Against this success, the proponents of the "lifeboat ethic" would argue that it is too slow, and they would take steps to *force* developing nations to reduce their birthrate even though the incentive for reduced fertility–the standard of living and its most meaningful index, infant mortality–is still far inferior to the levels which have motivated the demographic transition in the western countries. And where, in their view, it is too late to save a poor, overpopulated country the proponents of this so-called "ethic" would withdraw support (in the manner of the hopelessly wounded in military "triage") and allow it to perish.

This argument is based (at least in the realm of logic) on the view, to quote Hardin, that "It is literally beyond our ability to save them all". Hardin's assertion, if not the resulting "ethic," reflects a commonly held view that there is simply insufficient food and other resources in the world to support the present world population at the standard of living required to motivate the demographic transition. It is commonly pointed out, for example, that the U.S. consumes about one-third of the world's resources to support only six percent of the world's population, the inference being that there are simply not enough resources in the world to permit the rest of the world to achieve the standard of living and low birthrate characteristic of the U.S.

The fault in this reasoning is readily apparent if one examines the actual relationship between the birthrates and living standards of different countries. The only available comparative measure of standard of living is GNP per capita. Neglecting for a moment the faults inherent in GNP as a measure of the quality of life, a plot of birthrate against GNP per capita is very revealing. The poorest countries (GNP per capita less than $500 per year*) have the highest birthrates, 40-50 per 1,000 population per year. When GNP per capita per year exceeds $500 the birthrate drops sharply, reaching about 20/1,000 at $750-$1,000. Most of the nations in North America, Oceania, Europe and the USSR have about the same low birthrates–15-18/1,000–but their GNP's per capita per year range all the way from Greece ($941 per capita per year; birthrate 17/1,000) through Japan ($1,626 per capita per year; birthrate 18/1,000) to the richest country of all, the U.S. ($4,538 per capita per year; birthrate 18/1,000). What this means is that in order to bring the birthrates of the poor countries down to the low levels characteristic of the rich ones, the poor countries do not need to become as affluent (at least as measured, poorly, by GNP per capita) as the U.S. Achieving a per capita GNP only, let us say, one-fifth of that of the U.S.–$900 per capita per year–these countries could, according to the above relationship, reach birthrates almost as low as that of the European and North American countries.

The world average value for birthrate is 34/1,000, which is indicative of the overall rate of growth of the world population (the world average crude death rate is about 13/1,000). However, the world average per capita GNP is about $803 per year–a level of affluence which is characteristic of a number of nations with birthrates of 20/1,000. What this discrepancy tells us is that if the wealth of the world (at least as measured by GNP) were in fact evenly distributed among the people of the world, the entire world population should have a low birthrate–about 20/1,000–which would approach that characteristic of most European and North American countries (15-18/1,000).

Simply stated, the world has enough wealth to support the entire world population at a level that appears to convince most people that they need not have excessive numbers of children. The trouble is that the world's wealth is *not* evenly distributed, but sharply divided among moderately well-off and rich countries on the one hand and a much larger number of people that are very poor. The poor countries have high birthrates because they are extremely poor, and they are extremely poor because other countries are extremely rich.

[THE ROOTS OF HUNGER]

In a sense the demographic transition is a means of translating the availability of a decent level of resources, especially food, into a voluntary reduction in birthrate. It is a striking fact that the efficiency with which such resources can be converted into a reduced birthrate is much higher in the developing countries than in the advanced ones. Thus an improvement in GNP per capita per year from let us say $682 (as in Uruguay) to $4,538 (U.S.) reduces birthrate from 22/1,000 to 18/1,000. In contrast, according to the above relationships if the GNP per capita per year characteristic of India (about $88) were increased to only about $750, the Indian birthrate should fall from its actual value of about 42/1,000 to about 20/1,000. To put the matter more simply, the per capita cost of bringing the standard of living of poor countries with rapidly growing populations to the level which–based on the behavior of peoples all over the world–would motivate voluntary reduction of fertility is very small, compared to the per capita wealth

(Continued on page 56)

*** These and subsequent values are computed as U.S. 1969 dollars. The data relate to the 1969-70 period.**

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Running With Dick Gregory

I was hungry. Dick was not. I had skipped breakfast, missed lunch, and was beginning to doubt my dinner. Dick was in the 29th day of an air-and-water fast to wreck the CIA. We had 40 miles to go through heavy traffic to get to a lecture Dick was scheduled to give in less than an hour. I was worried. Dick was not.

I drove while Dick did all the talking. As we crept down onto the Hollywood Freeway, Dick was saying that a premonition had come over him the night he left Ralph Schoenman's house in New Jersey with a copy of the JFK autopsy report under his arm. Outside the house was a Pepsi Cola truck. "Pepsi truck don't have no business being out there at 3 a.m. I *knew* that. Trouble was coming, that I *knew*. Then all of a sudden here come three plainclothes cops. They jump me and my driver. I say: 'I'm Dick Gregory, man. What do you want?' And the cat say: 'Whaaa?' And say to his buddies: 'Man, this is Dick Gregory.' And say: 'Man, you all right.' Say: 'Here's a man that go to jail fishin' for the Indians and he don't even eat fish.' He say: 'Anything I can do for you, brother?' I say: 'Man, I can't believe you go around killin' folks and don't even know who they are. Wow!' And say: 'What y'all are probably looking for I didn't bring with me, anyway.' And say: 'By the way, what was it all about?' And he say: 'Dope pickup in the Pepsi truck.'"

Dick slapped the dashboard to underscore the truth of the premonition. I hesitated to mention it, but a Pepsi truck was just then drawing abreast of us on Dick's side of the car. I hoped Dick would notice it so I could see what he would make of the coincidence. I'd been with him less than an hour, but already it was clear that he had an uncanny eye for omens, a way of putting things together to arrive at enlightened results.

"... you can tell when a cat is government, like when you see a dude in a Pinkerton suit, out directing traffic? But standin' wrong? Ain't no Pinkerton. I mean a Pinkerton guard stand one way. He's a man who doesn't have authority. He's just there with his little radio all day, listenin' to the baseball game or the wrestlin'. Don't make that much money. But a government man get in a Pinkerton suit and you can tell by the way he stand that he's makin' big dough! My wife and I used to go to England, and the British would put a dude on us that was supposed to be the bellman. Come all the way out to the airport, bowin' and scrapin', and for three years Lillian

by Barry Farrell

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"I'm just fightin' for survival, man, and me with ten children. But it's that ability to raise money, to earn it, to get on a plane, to put other people on planes, to take the message, to keep it alive—that's what I'm here for, and that's what I'm going to do."

never understood how come the camera always wound up disappearin'. So I say: 'Watch me lay a tip on him.' I mean even if he's been told to take it, it still ranks him, man, and you *know* he ain't no bellman . . . ."

The Pepsi truck was falling back in traffic, so I broke in long enough to point it out. Dick glanced back and shrugged in a way that could have meant "So what?" or "They follow me everywhere," depending on the listener's imagination. Then he plunged back into his monologue, picking up where he left off. We were still a good hour away from the city of Orange, where his audience would already be gathering at the Chapman College lecture hall. But Dick seemed happy and relaxed and bent on filling the time with a complete tour of his recent thoughts and activities.

He reminded me that he had run from Chicago to Washington a few months before in the cause of feeding the hungry, had been arrested in the last anti-war demonstration at the White House, and would be leaving New York July 4 on a three-month bicentennial protest run to Los Angeles during which he intended to nourish himself on nothing more than fruit juice and small amounts of a food he'd invented composed of kelp, sunflower seeds and sesame oil. This was not to say that he'd be giving any less time to his efforts to have the assassinations reopened to honest investigators; the great thing about the run, in fact, was that it would draw out the press in every city he passed through, giving him a chance to spread the word on the CIA's use of corpses from Vietnam to smuggle heroin into the country, its infiltration of police departments and labor unions, its involvement in running guns to youth gangs in the ghettos, and other related matters. He would not break his fast until the whole truth was out, and neither would his wife, who was home in Massachusettes with their ten children, all of whom were "fruitetarians" like their parents, but who were not yet given to fasting. Lillian was in the 42nd day of her fast, and her weight was down to 119 from its all-time high of 360. Dick's weight had dropped to 89 pounds during the longest of his water-only fasts, an 81-day vigil to end the war. Now he was spare and fit at 125, having regained much of the strength he'd lost in the first 21 days of the CIA fast.

". . . after 21 days you reverse yourself and your body starts gettin' stronger. See, we acquire a need for food the same way we acquire a need for alcohol. I always thought I had good energy up till now. But if somebody'd told me ten years ago – and I ran track all my life – if somebody'd told me that I could run from Chicago to Washington, a 43-year-old man, on nothing, no salts, just fruit juice and a little bit of the food I invented, I would have said ridiculous. But this kind of energy I'm working with now, when it gets to flowin' real good it's something unbelievable. You can do things with energy that are so unbelievable and amazing. You can stop time. Its really amazing what you can do with time. Of course, time doesn't exist, anyhow . . ."

["THERE'S AN ENERGY HERE . . ."]

My strong desire for a cigarette might have released some nasty neurochemical at about this point, because the thought entered my mind that Dick's fuel might be nothing more than high-octane hysteria. I was prepared to believe his statement that his fasts did not include the use of any pills, capsules, shots or chemical food supplements, but how about minute-by-minute infusions of well-informed paranoia? True, he was effective enough – he had written eight books, made enough money to contribute several hundred thousand dollars to causes he found important, and was probably the country's leading lecturer, with a schedule that called for 300 lectures every ten months. But how much longer could he keep it up? He had mentioned that he'd been up until almost 4 a.m. the night before talking with students in Tacoma, Washington, where he'd gone after making three appearances in Texas the day before. It was already well past sundown as we plowed south on the Santa Ana Freeway, where Disneyland traffic had begun to impede our progress. Even if Dick kept his talk down to the two-hour minimum, it would be after midnight before we got back to Hollywood. I'd have a chance to observe how well he could hold the pace.

". . . openin' up dead bodies overseas, that's a big operation. Can't nobody pull that off but the CIA. I mean, looka here. You gotta open the bodies up, pack 'em with heroin, sew 'em back up, mix 'em with the straight bodies, ship 'em to California, have somebody meet 'em, take 'em aside, cut 'em open, take out the heroin, sew 'em back up, sneak off with the stash, get it out to the buyers. I mean that ain't no jive thang! And when that gets exposed, a whole lot is going to get exposed with it . . ."

I had given up on dinner with unusual good will, but my wish for a cigarette was beginning to distract me. I asked Dick if it would bother him if I smoked. In the course of saying no, not in the slightest, he got around to telling how he used to smoke two or three packs a day,

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while also working his way through at least a fifth of scotch. That was back in the early '60s, when he was king of the "relevant" nightclub comics, a breed that flourished briefly in the last years of the Eisenhower Administration but ceased to be funny under the Kennedys. All except Dick. Dick had turned his back on the biggest bookings of his career in order to be free to join the civil rights struggles then erupting all over the South. Refusing any engagement he couldn't cancel on short notice, he cut himself out of Vegas, the big rooms, the places where the money was. I recalled discussing these matters when I interviewed him for *Time* one afternoon in San Francisco; the occasion for the interview was his offer of a $25,000 reward for the arrest of the killers of the three civil rights workers, Goodman, Chaney and Schwerner. Dick was portly in those days, and he had a commanding kind of flash in his cashmere jacket and patent leather loafers. We drank bloody marys and I laughed at his wise jokes. The story never ran.

By the time we passed Disneyland we were still ten miles from Chapman College and I knew it was long past curtain time. I asked Dick what time it was. He studied his watch in the mercury-vapor freeway glow. "We're all right, brother," he said. "Great," I said, much relieved. "What time is it?" "Never mind," Dick said. "We're just all right."

Traffic and hunger had given me a headache. I pressed a thumb into my aching eye. "Hey! Is this what you're doing?" Dick asked in high excitement. I looked over to see him touching both thumbs to the bridge of his nose while extending his fingers to form a diamond just below his eyes. I told him it wasn't what I was doing. "Oh," he said. "'Cause this is an incredible way to get the traffic to clear. You watch now. This traffic's going to clear right up. There's an energy here that you can have a lot of fun with. Sometime when it gets foggy, just try this out. Just do this with your hands and right away you'll see it clearin' up in front of you. Then look out your back window and it'll be all foggy behind. Guess we're almost there now. I better get my energy flowin' for the lecture."

Dick fell silent for a few seconds, then launched into a curious story about how he had escaped a plot on his life last Christmas. He had intended to picket the White House on Christmas Day, having failed in his original plan to hire billboards in Times Square and downtown Chicago to display vast blowups of the "tramp picture," the sidewalk photo taken in Dallas on assassination day, showing two men who bore an intriguing resemblance to Frank Sturgis and E. Howard Hunt. Dick wanted to put the picture on the billboards over the caption, "Send These Boys to Camp Before They Send You To Camp," but technical problems had intervened and he had settled for another siege on the White House. He was fasting to prepare himself, and "the fast was groovy, but I couldn't get the balance and decided it wasn't right for me to go." Then, on Christmas Day, he heard the news that Marshall Fields, an American black dressed up like an Arab, had crashed through the White House gates in a car rigged with dynamite. "If we'd been there, the car would have blown up, we would have died, and they would have blamed it all on the Arabs," Dick said. "I realized then that there was something about those tramp pictures that was big, that was huge, so I decided to send a telegram to Ford setting down some basic things I thought we should be asking about the CIA and the assassinations. I offered him all the evidence I had as the most sincere Christmas present I could think to give him at this critical hour."

["... RECESS IS JUST ABOUT OVER"]

I pulled up in front of the lecture hall. Dick got out and took a minute loading up with briefcases and canvas bags full of clippings and papers. Then he headed inside while I went off to park the car. By the time I got back, he was being introduced to a largely black audience of at least 500 – "Ladies and gentlemen, that outstanding lecturer, Mr. Dick Gregory!" A clock in the lobby showed us to be a full hour late, but no one appeared to have given up on the evening, and Dick was greeted with a whooping round of applause. He slid into the lecture with a dozen or so softly-stated throwaway lines.

"... I mean any time a President's best friend's name is Bebe . . . I *knew* something was wrong when Nixon slipped and called April 15 Christmas . . . I heard Ford was dumb, but I didn't really believe it until I saw that picture of him in Colorado, tryin' to put his socks on over his skis . . . I didn't realize how bad off the economy was until Henry Ford got busted a couple months back, you know, drunk? On the wrong side of the road? With a young woman in the car? I wasn't surprised by the young woman. I thought they all had them. What scared me was the car he got busted in. I mean here's the man that owns *all* the Lincoln Continentals, *all* the Mark IVs, *all* the T-Birds, and he gets busted in a Pinto . . ."

Soon the jokes gave way to grim claims and charges, which in turn gave way to more jokes, new routines, new warnings. It was an expert collage of voices and attitudes in which laughter disarmed and made the audience all the more open to Dick's spiritualism, his anger, his theories on the conspiracy that was robbing America of its moral strength. His voice would take on heavy black tones, then rise to an incredulous falsetto as he ticked off his clinching arguments.

"... if the police can't get rid of crime, let's get rid of the police . . . why can't they find Patty Hearst? Because the people that's lookin' for her got her . . . don't worry about no mugger muggin' yo grandma; worry about the anti-trust violators that are muggin' *all* grandmas . . . I don't want to scare you, but those of you who had a big meal last Christmans, I sure hope y'all took a picture of it . . . I predict that 18 months from now we'll have the people who're in the streets pushin' dope now pushin' sugar . . . yeah, let's go get sweet . . . government'll have trained cockroaches to sniff out the sugar . . . I won't mind . . . I was raised by a cockroach . . . Black Flag wouldn't do nothin' but get him high . . . listen: America isn't a bad country because of the way it's treated blacks and Indians. America is a bad country because of the way

(Continued on page 54)

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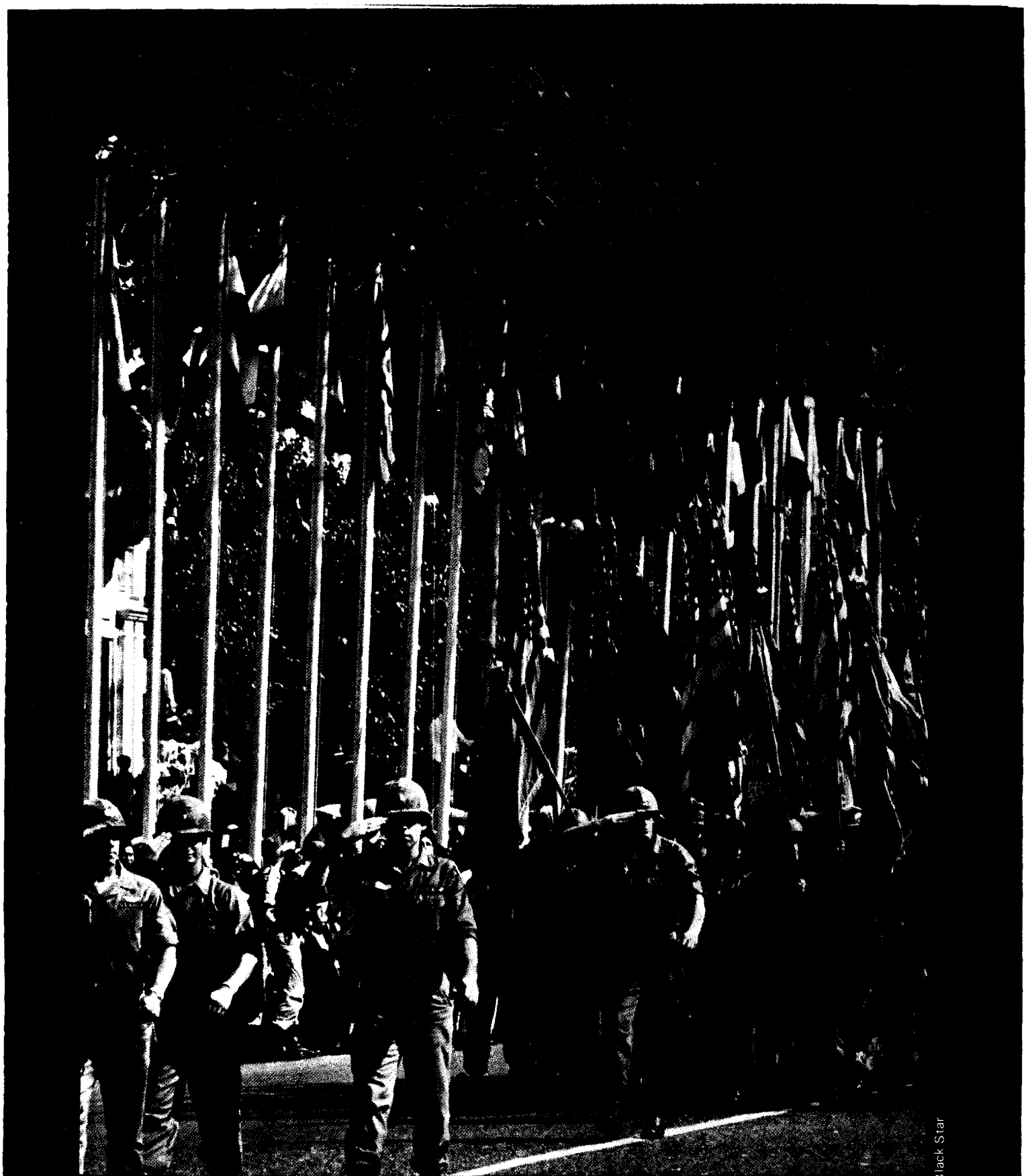

Black Star

Who Will

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The Remaking of History

American imperialism has suffered a stunning defeat in Indochina. But the same forces are engaged in another war against a much less resilient enemy, the American people. Here, the prospects for success

are much greater. The battleground is ideological, not military. At stake are the lessons to be drawn from the American war in Indochina; the outcome will determine the course and character of new imperial ventures.

As the American-imposed regime in Saigon finally collapsed, Japan's leading newspaper, *Asahi Shimbun,* made the following editorial comment:

> *The war in Vietnam has been in every way a war of national emancipation. The age in which any great power can suppress indefinitely the rise of nationalism has come to an end.*

The comment on the war in Vietnam is accurate. The projection for the future, far too optimistic.

The question is a critical one. The great powers surely do not take the American failure in Vietnam as an indication that they can no longer use force to "suppress the rise of nationalism." In fact, during the period of its Vietnam debacle, the U.S. achieved some notable successes elsewhere, for example in Indonesia, Brazil, Chile, and the Dominican Republic. And the lessons of Vietnam surely do not teach our partners in détente that they must relax their brutal grip on their imperial domains.

Apologists for state violence understand very well that the general public has no real stake in imperial conquest and domination. The public costs of empire may run high, whatever the gains to dominant social and economic groups. Therefore the public must be aroused by jingoist appeals, or at least kept disciplined and submissive, if American force is to be readily available for global management.

Here lies the task for the intelligentsia. If it is determined that we *must,* say, invade the Persian Gulf *for the benefit of mankind,* then there must be no emotional or moral objections from the unsophisticated masses, and surely no vulgar display of protest. The ideologists must guarantee that no "wrong lessons" are learned from the experience of the Indochina war and the resistance to it.

During the Vietnam war a vast gap opened between the nation's ideologists and a substantial body of public opinion. This gap must be closed if the world system is to be managed properly in coming years. Thus we are enjoined to "avoid recriminations," and serious efforts will be made to restrict attention to questions that have no significance or long-term implications. It will be necessary to pursue the propaganda battle with vigor and enterprise to reestablish the basic principle that the use of force by the U.S. is legitimate, if only it can succeed.

If America's Vietnam "intervention" is understood, as it properly must be, as a major crime against peace, then an ideological barrier will be erected against the use of U.S. force in the future of global management. Hence those who are committed to the founding principles of American imperialism must ensure that such questions are never raised. They may concede the stupidity of American policy, and even its savagery, but not the illegitimacy inherent in the entire enterprise, the fact that this was a war of *aggression* committed by the U.S., first against South Vietnam, and then the rest of Indochina. These issues must be excluded from current and future debate over the "lessons of the debacle," because they go directly to the crucial matter of the resort to force and violence to guarantee a certain vision of global order.

The nature of this "certain vision" must be concealed from public scrutiny, if power is to be exercised effectively. A prestigious study group twenty years ago identified the primary threat of "communism" as the economic transformation of the Communist powers "in ways which reduce their willingness and ability to complement the industrial economies of the West."[1] That is an accurate and astute comment. American policy has been guided by the aim of preventing any region from extricating itself from the U.S.-dominated global system and thereby releasing its resources, human and material, for development guided by internal needs. Whether the system is "fascist" or "communist" or "democratic" has been a question of little moment. The threat is not "communism," but a significant measure of independence (or still worse, dependence on an enemy).

Pursuing the forbidden question leads one to examine the origins and causes of the American war. Elaborate documentation is now available, and the conclusions indicated seem to me fairly clear. It was feared – under the plausible assumptions of the more rational versions of the "domino theory" – that Communist success in Indochina

by Noam Chomsky

Preceding page: Vietnam National Day

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might cause "the rot to spread" to the rest of mainland Southeast Asia and perhaps beyond, to Indonesia and South Asia as well. The war planners never believed the lurid and literal-minded variants of the domino theory served up to terrorize the public. What concerned them primarily was the demonstration effect, what was sometimes characterized in internal documents as "ideological successes."

An egalitarian, modernizing revolutionary movement in one area might serve as a model elsewhere. The long-term effects, it was feared, might go so far as an accommodation between Japan, the major industrial power of the East, and Asian countries that had extricated themselves from the U.S.-dominated global system. The end effect would be as if the U.S. had lost the Pacific War, which had been fought, in part, to prevent Japan from creating a "new order" from which the U.S. would be effectively excluded. Certainly the issues are more complex; I have examined them elsewhere in more detail.[2] But this, I think, is the heart of the matter.

It is possible to condemn American imperialism and yet remain within the framework of official ideology. This can be achieved by explaining imperialism in terms of some abstract "will to power and domination," again, a neutral category that does not relate to the actual structure of our social and economic system. Thus a serious and longtime opponent of the Vietnam war can write that "American involvement in Vietnam represented, more than anything else, the triumph of an expansionist and imperial interest . . ."[3] But his criticism need not be labelled "irresponsible" by mainstream propagandists, for he adds that "in the manner of all imperial visions, the vision of a preponderant America was solidly rooted in the will to exercise dominion over others," where the nature of this "dominion" is specified no further, and thus may be understood as some socially neutral trait. A threat to dominant ideology arises only when this "will to exercise dominion" is analyzed in terms of its specific social and economic components, and is related to the actual structure of power and control over institutions in American society.

In short, there are ideologically permissible forms of opposition to imperial aggression. One may criticize the intellectual failures of planners, their moral failures, and even the generalized and abstract "will to exercise dominion" to which they have regrettably, but so understandably succumbed. But the principle that the U.S. may exercise force to guarantee a certain global order in the interests of international corporations, which require a world "open" to their penetration and control – that is beyond the bounds of polite discourse.

Accordingly, the American intelligentsia now face several major tasks. They must rewrite the history of the war to disguise the fact that it was, in essence, an American war against South Vietnam, a war of annihilation that spilled over to the rest of Indochina. And they must obscure the fact that this aggression was constrained and hampered by a mass movement of protest and resistance, which engaged in effective direct action outside the bounds of "propriety," long before established political spokesmen proclaimed themselves to be its leaders. In sum, they must ensure that all issues of principle are excluded from debate, so that no significant lessons will be drawn from the war.

[THE VERDICT OF HISTORY]

What conclusions then, are to be drawn from the horrendous experience of Vietnam? There are those who regard the question as premature. The editor of the *New York Times* tells us that:

> *Clio, the goddess of history, is cool and slow and elusive in her ways . . . Only later, much later, can history begin to make an assessment of the mixture of good and evil, of wisdom and folly, of ideals and illusions in the long Vietnam story.*

We must not "try to pre-empt history's role." Rather, "this is a time for humility and for silence and for prayer"(Apr5).

There is at least one lesson that the Vietnam war should have taught even the most obtuse: it is a good idea to watch the performance of the national institutions of propaganda with a cautious and skeptical eye. The editorial just cited is a case in point. The editors call for reason and restraint. Who can object? But let us look a little further. They go on:

> *There are those Americans who believe that the war to preserve a non-Communist, independent South Vietnam could have been waged differently. There are other Americans who believe that a viable, non-Communist South Vietnam was always a myth . . . A decade of fierce polemics has failed to resolve this ongoing quarrel.*

We must be silent and pray as we await the verdict of history on this "complex disagreement."

The *N.Y. Times* editors, in their humility, do not presume to deliver Clio's verdict. But they are careful to define the issues properly. The hawks allege that we could have won, while the doves reply that victory was always beyond our grasp. As for the merits of these opposing views, which mark the limits of responsible thinking, we must await the judgment of history.

There is, to be sure, a third logically possible position: Regardless of Clio's final judgment on the controversy between hawks and the doves, the United States simply had no legal or moral right to intervene in the internal affairs of Vietnam in the first place. It had no right to support the French effort to reconquer Indochina, or to attempt – successfully or not – to establish "a viable, non-Communist South Vietnam" in violation of the 1954 Geneva Accords, nor to use force and violence to "preserve" the regime it had imposed.

The only judgment that Clio is permitted to hand down is a judgment of tactics: could we have won? Other questions might be imagined. Should we have won? Did we have the right to try? Would an American victory have been a tragedy of historic proportions? Were we engaged in criminal aggression? The U.S. had neither the authority nor the competence to settle the affairs of Indochina. But this position is excluded from the debate, as the *N.Y. Times* sets the ground rules.

There is method in the call for humility, silence and prayer. Its manifest purpose is to restrict such controversy as may persist to questions of tactics, so that the basic

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Michael Abrams/Black Star

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Above: Bombed houses in Hon Gai, Gulf of Tonkin
Center: French officers count captured Viet Minh guerrillas–1952

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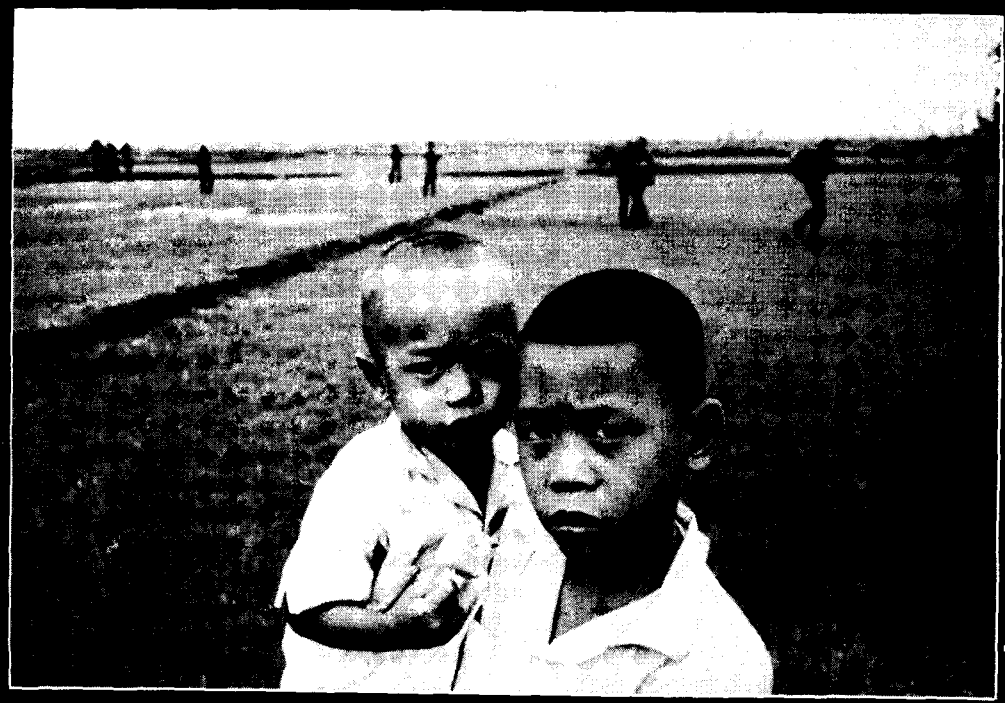

Tim Page

Tim Page

Above: Chu Lai – 1965

Mobile Buddha of Hoi Ian

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Revolution and Continuity

Vietnamese commentators outdo one another in repeating that "history is both revolution and continuity." Confucius hasn't been burned in effigy on Hanoi's Ba Dinh Square. The going political creed is Marxism, but "the work of scholars" is part of "the nation's heritage the new society must assimilate," as Nguyen Khac Vien pointed out in his "Experiences Vietnamiennes" (Editions Sociales, Paris). The "revolution" absorbs, as it were, the Confucian "continuity."

The Vietnamese have always been ready to talk about their history stretching over thousands of years. When the writer-tactician Nguyen Trai helped Le Loi to found the Le Dynasty in 1428, he observed: "We have raised the banner to drive the aggressor out. Our homeland, the land of a civilization thousands of years old . . ."

Here the Confucian Nguyen Trai is speaking like the North Vietnamese Communist Party's First Secretary Le Duan and Defense Minister Vo Nguyen Giap, without paradox, one might say. So the revolutionary break smacks of the countryside. A nation of peasants has spawned an army of engineers skilled in handling radar and missiles. But if tactics may sometimes be described as being "Russian" (tank onslaughts) or "Chinese" (encircled cities), the attacks are led by Vietnamese revolutionaries who are plugged into their backgrounds – hence into their traditions – and are politically motivated by the desire to change social relationships.

Pitted against the Vietnamese determination to be Vietnamese, the American determination to win weakened to the point of an agonizing defeat. As it was leading the struggle to prop up the status quo, Washington could count only on a Vietnamese society without roots in the people. Because the Americans did not have the peasants with them, and could find no foothold for their action in the Vietnamese culture, they tried to change the country's human layout in the hope of thereby changing its political belief. The villager who refused to go along would have his straw hut burned down, and millions of forcibly urbanized and rural families would – Washington hoped – change their outlook and provide a social base for the Saigon regime.

But the campaign was a total flop. Anti-communism was no more reinforced by the "new life hamlets" of Diem's time and the shanty lines which sprang up around cities at a later date than by the Asia Development Bank's economic plans (without altering returns on investment, or the suggestions of World Bank experts. Imported values were at first resented as an aggression. At the very height of the American war, the Vietnamese in Saigon were dreaming of Vietnam.

These facts must be borne in mind to understand what is happening and raise a few questions concerning the future, even without being able to offer any answers to them.

It's no accident that the urban population did not rally to the defense of a concept of liberty defined abroad, and that Thieu's army fizzled out. From now on most of the Vietnamese population will probably be subjected to what foreigners will not fail to describe as "a purification conducted by the North's austere cadres." It may be fairer to describe it as a rediscovery of traditional values. The Vietnamese are very straightlaced: a Hanoi party official, for example, told me he was shocked by a scene in a film, which wasn't American, but Czechoslovak. They respect the family, old persons in particular, and one criticism they level against America is that it created a situation where young children, depraved by poverty, mug old persons to steal a few pennies. When mutinous Saigon soldiers ploughed over the Thieu family's burial vault, it was a sacriligious gesture by which they hoped to undo another: Nguyen Van Thieu's renunciation of his Vietnamese past, his betrayal of his ancestors.

A thorough, deep-rooted unification of the country must be preceded by this determination of the Vietnamese to rediscover their own identity and in their own country. But it pre-supposes other conditions.

The first is social and economic. The North has been Socialist for over 20 years. Changing the South's social patterns will necessarily require time, especially if the authorities want to avoid the "serious mistakes" made by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1955, which are pointed out in the quite offical history of Vietnamese Communism. How is agrarian reform (initiated only last year in the North) going to be applied? How are the peasants going to be organized? A good many of the farmers in the Nan Bo Delta (the former Cochin China) have for some time been used to working with machines, which are still rare in the North. The Southerners have been in contact with a "modern" world. "Modern? Watch out!" I was told recently in Hanoi. "Who's modern? The peasant with a cultivator in an unchanged society? Or the one from the Delta or the Red River, whose outlook has evolved and who keeps his books cooperatively and is beginning to shake off his feudal past?"

Reconstruction will also be necessary, and for this the South will need outside help, but without political strings. Anyone flying over the 17th parallel to Hue can gauge the extent of the disaster. Vast stretches of forest have disappeared. The soil is unusable in whole districts. Since 1970, a quarter of the buffalo herd in the South has perished. Chemicals employed in the war are continuing to cause havoc.

Besides it is premature to say that the whole of the country is going to be shortly run by a single government. The North is on the Socialist side, but already the South's revolutionary government is reasserting its determination to take its place among the non-aligned nations of the world. This decision could prod Hanoi into moving away from other Communist countries, and, without switching sides but capitalizing on the South's special features, throwing its lot in with a Third World still seeking its own way.

The Communist Party – known as

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by Jacques Decornoy

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principle of official ideology will stand: Alone among the states of the world, the U.S. has the authority to impose its rule by force. Correspondingly, the authentic peace movement, which challenged this basic doctrine, must be excluded from all future debate. Its position does not even enter into the "complex disagreement" that so troubles the editors of the *N.Y. Times.*

It is interesting that not a single letter was published challenging the remarkable editorial stand of the *Times*. I say "published." At least one was sent; probably many more. The *Times* has seen fit to publish quite a range of opinion, including a proposal that we undertake nuclear bombardment. But there must, after all, be some limits in a civilized journal.

The *Times* is not alone in trying to restrict discussion to the narrow and trivial issues formulated in its editorials. The *Christian Science Monitor* gives this assessment:

> *Many voices, including this newspaper, regard the communist victory as a tragedy, believing the U.S. involvement in Vietnam to have been honorable, although the conduct of the war in both its political and military phases was fraught with mistakes and misjudgments. Others will argue, with equal cogency, that America should long ago have realized its mistakes and moved rapidly to extricate itself and permit the South Vietnamese to work things out for themselves. But surely there can be a unifying consensus . . . (April 22)*

Note that the opposing view is assumed to share the *Monitor's* basic premises, while differing on a question of timing. In fact, this is the standard position put forth in the national media, with a few honorable exceptions. Criticism of state policy is always welcome, but it must remain within civilized bounds. An Arthur Schlesinger may express his skepticism with regard to Joseph Alsop's prediction that the American war will succeed, for he goes on to stress that "we all pray that Mr. Alsop will be right." It is obvious, without discussion, that any right-thinking person must pray for the victory of American arms. As Schlesinger explained in 1966, American policy may yet succeed, in which event "we may all be saluting the wisdom and statesmanship of the American government" in conducting a war that was turning Vietnam into "a land of ruin and wreck." But he thought success to be unlikely. Had he gone on to urge that the U.S. abandon its failed enterprise, the *Monitor* would concede, in retrospect, that this extreme proposal had cogency equal to its own.

The *Washington Post* has been the most consistent critic of the war among the national media. Consider, then, its editorial response to the termination of the war. In an April 30 editorial entitled "Deliverance," the *Post* insists that we can "afford the luxury of a debate" over the meaning of this "particular agony." Americans should develop "a larger judgment of the war as a whole," but it must be a balanced judgment, including both the positive and negative elements:

> *For if much of the actual conduct of Vietnam policy over the years was wrong and misguided – even tragic – it cannot be denied that some part of the purpose of that policy was right and defensible. Specifically, it was right to hope that the people of South Vietnam would be able to decide on their own form of government and social order. The American public is entitled, indeed obligated, to explore how good impulses came to be transmuted into bad policy, but we cannot afford to cast out all remembrance of that earlier impulse. For the fundamental "lesson" of Vietnam surely is not that we as a people are intrinsically bad, but rather that we are capable of error – and on a gigantic scale. That is the spirit in which the post-mortems on Vietnam ought now to go forward. Not just the absence of recrimination, but also the presence of insight and honesty is required to bind up the nation's wounds.*

Note again the crucial words: "wrong," "misguided," "tragic," "error." That is as far as "insight and honesty" can carry us in reaching our judgment.

The *Post* encourages us to recall that "some part of the purpose" of our policy in Vietnam was "right and defensible," namely, our early effort to help the people of South Vietnam "to decide on their own form of government and social order." Surely we must agree that it is right and defensible to help people to achieve this end. But exactly when was this "early impulse" revealed in action? Let us try to date it more precisely, recalling on the way some of the crucial facts about the war.

[WHERE DID WE GO WRONG?]

Was it in the pre-1954 period that we were trying to help the people of South Vietnam in this way? That can hardly be what the *Post* editors have in mind. At that time, the United States was backing the French in their effort to reconquer Indochina. As Truman's Secretary of State Dean Acheson noted, success in this effort "depends, in the end, on overcoming opposition of indigenous population." The Vietnamese resistance forces were led by Ho Chi Minh, whose appeals for American assistance had been rebuffed. No one had the slightest doubt that he had immense popular support as the leader of Vietnamese national forces. But, Acheson explained, "Question whether Ho is as much nationalist as Commie is irrelevant." He is an "outright Commie." We must therefore help the French who are determined, in Acheson's phrase, "to protect IC [Indochina] from further COMMIE encroachments." Nothing here about helping the people of South Vietnam to determine their own fate.

Perhaps it was after the Geneva Accords that our "early impulse" flourished. Hardly a plausible contention. The ink was barely dry on the agreements when the National Security Council (NSC) adopted a general program of subversion to undermine the political settlement, explicitly reserving the right to use military force "to defeat local Communist subversion or rebellion not constituting armed attack"– that is, in direct violation of the "supreme law of the land." Such force might be used "either locally or against the external source of such subversion or rebellion (including Communist China if determined to be the

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The Press at War

Nothing so betrayed America's mission in Indochina as the ending of it; no glory was more vain, no honor more tarnished, no self-deception more complete. From the victory of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia through the Vietnamese offensive, the Babylift, and the evacuation of Saigon, the American government and the press recapitulated and exaggerated all the failures of the last three decades: the prejudices, misunderstandings, faulty analyses, blind predictions and false reports that produced and prolonged the war in every stage. And at the end – if indeed it is the end – Americans for the most part missed the point of defeat: it was not so much what they did not do, as what they did not know.

I say "they," perhaps immodestly, because I feel a distance from the opinion molders and mongerers of official America whose misconceptions of Vietnam and the war have become standard history. A pall of mindless legitimacy hangs over the politicians and publicists who have for years avoided or ignored the other America of alternative news sources, radical analysts and anti-war activists. Some other history will have to absolve us. Even the most blatant confirmation of what "illegitimate" sources have been saying all along is unacceptable to the press that is read, watched or heard by most Americans.

Since Watergate, journalists have been indulging their sense of self-importance with congratulations all around for the job of saving the Republic with a little muckraking. The events of Indochina this spring have only extended that pride of profession. For the sturdy center of American journalism – the networks, the *New York Times,* the *Washington Post,* the newsmagazines and like-minded outfits – the lesson of Vietnam (and, by inference, Cambodia) is that it was the wrong war, at the wrong time, in the wrong place, etc. That was the notion bruited by David Halberstam and his quagmire colleagues in the early 1960s, and after a bit of argument from unthinking fogeys, accepted by the major media. The ultimate defeat of United States policy in Indochina "proved" the Halberstam thesis correct.

To accept that simple lesson is not to learn much about America, the countries of Indochina, or the world. A *Times* reporter or a CBS correspondent can yammer about the "wrong war" until he's blue in the nose, and never mention imperialism, capitalism, revolution, class or race. In fact, the standard ideology of the Indochinese wars is as simple and as simple-minded as the theory of a football game: which is hardly surprising, since war correspondents are generally sports reporters *manqués,* and Presidents – notoriously – are football coaches by other means. The problem with football ideology, however, is that it is all plays and no

by Andrew Kopkind

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politics. What is important is the score, the star, the surface action. Translated journalistically onto the Indochinese battlefield, that ideology focuses on battles rather than social movements: body counts, generals, military tactics.

The press was unprepared for the *denouement* of the war not because reporters missed a crucial interview during the 1973-74 "half time," or because they were too busy elsewhere, but because those factors which were to be critical did not fit into the available categories for discussion. Specifically, they never adequately explained that the basis of the 1973 Paris Agreement was the promise made by the United States and the Thieu government to recognize the Provisional Revolutionary Government as a political and administrative force in South Vietnam: and that the failure to fulfill that promise gave the P.R.G. no alternative but to enforce it by any means necessary.

Despite the repeated examples of lies from American and Saigon officials of every rank, American reporters continued to rely on these usually unreliable sources. What they got were wrong "facts" and useless opinions. The State Department never departed from the line taken in its discredited White Paper of 1965 that the war in Vietnam was occasioned by "invasion from the North," and much of the press continued to echo that theme. The picture of events in Vietnam that filtered back home to America placed the North Vietnamese army poised for attack against a South Vietnamese republic firmly under the control of the administration in Saigon. At least that is what the U.S. Embassy and the Thieu government told the reporters, and why look elsewhere for explanations?

The P.R.G. and the Khmer Rouge remained "enigmatic" and inscrutable, phantoms that slipped in and out of jungles and could not be reached for comment as easily as the press attaché at the U.S. Military Mission. Even the respectable press referred to the opposition forces as "Reds," or "Communists," which obscured the real politics of the war and made it impossible to discern the factors in the steady deterioration of the Thieu government in Saigon and the Lon Nol government in Phnom Penh. While the few Left reporters and anti-war movement news services with correspondents on the spot easily detected the cracks and strains in the central control of South Vietnam and Cambodia, the press continued to take the official claims at face value. If they had bothered to look, the major media reporters would have found intense political maneuvering as well as revolutionary organizing in villages and regions listed as searched and destroyed or cleared and held.

As the war in Vietnam neared its end, some newspapers and magazines rediscovered the P.R.G., which was still called the Viet Cong, long after it was conceded that the term was deliberately prejudicial. But the politics of the P.R.G. was hardly noticed; the military effort by "Hanoi" was paramount. Thus, in the last paragraph of a very long story on page 25 of the *Boston Evening Globe* of March 31, it was reported:

"A Hanoi broadcast, monitored in Tokyo today, said the Viet Cong is ready to hold talks with a South Vietnamese government which excludes President Thieu and which abides by the Paris cease-fire to 'quickly settle all the affairs of South Vietnam.'"

At least the *Globe* mentioned the "Viet Cong" offer; others neglected it until mid-April, when it began to dawn even on the dullards that the P.R.G. was following a carefully conceived and consistent political position that had developed organically out of the Paris Peace negotiations. But by April it was too late to help anyone understand what had been going on in Vietnam in the previous two years, or previous twenty.

[A PROGRAMMED PRESS]

It is not just a stubborn streak in the American press which made its Indochina reporting so shallow, faulty and downright wrong-headed. A complex ideological pattern conveniently blocks reality from the contemplation of correspondents and the analyses of editors. "Hanoi's Triumph" – the headline slashed across the cover of *Time* – is not just a catchy phrase, but an expression of a belief system which sees "Communism," personified as the capital of a nation, marching and marauding through innocent democracies. It leads reporters who pride themselves on their "objectivity" to see cities "fall" when they might as easily view them as "liberated," or merely as a change of administrations. Communists "nibble" and "gobble" territory (the *Boston Evening Globe*); they "split the country in half" (the *Times*). A P.R.G. assault on Bien Hoa is a "terror" attack; the "bloodbath" is elevated from fear-fantasy to certainty as the "tragedy" of Vietnam enters its final hours. This is more than florid and melodramatic phrase-mongering: it exemplifies a dogmatic bias held by writers who would quickly condemn similar prejudices in the press of countries they fear or despise.

The ideology of counter-revolution survives the mass anti-war Movement. The *Washington Post*, the *New York Times* and the *Boston Globe* all editorially joined the anti-war constituency as the war dragged on; the *Globe* was an early joiner, and in many ways was the most "liberal" major newspaper in the country during the war years. And yet as the Saigon government tottered, all three newspapers supported additional military aid to the Thieu regime. America's "commitment" and "responsibility" was invoked; it would be detrimental to national interests to abandon Saigon.

"Saigon's Desperate Hour," the *Times* headlined one of its editorials, but it seemed as if Washington were more desperate than that. The liberal media, no less than the conservative press, so closely identifies itself with imperial interests that a blow to those interests is cause for alarm. To a real opposition – one based not on ephemeral success or failure but on opposition to the imperial policy itself – there was no reason in the world to continue support to Thieu. But to those who differ with American administrations on tactics rather than ideology, a defeat for Washington is bad for business and should be avoided if possible.

When it became clear that avoidance was impossible, all three papers changed their editorial positions and – along with President Ford, it seems – focused on "humanitarian aid" to South Vietnam as a means of fulfilling the American commitments. Although the ropes were choked with rats scurrying from the foundering ship, the bias was never lost. The refugees may not have been "voting with their feet" for President Thieu, but their flight was never explain-

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ed except in the most banal terms: "the real enemy is war," a *Times* correspondent said. A safe statement, but, again, not quite helpful.

The correspondents who did talk to a passing refugee or two were already programmed for the conventional answers. The best quotes would be from the Vietnamese middle class who could speak French or English, or at least express themselves in terms which American reporters understand. (Bernard Weinraub's quote-of-the-war came from a Dalat businessman who was getting out of town before the Communists came; "Did you ever see Hanoi?" he asked the *Times'* Weinraub. "Drab, drab, drab," the Vietnamese said, with distaste.) In Boston, where I followed these events – too far from the scene to feel much of a closeness with them – the only interesting commentary came from the few Vietnamese students living here and continuing their scrutiny of the situation in their homeland. But the daily papers and the local network affiliates did not think to use the Vietnamese students' material. It would have contradicted the standard theory of the refugee's heroic flight from totalitarian terror.

The press had less luck with the Babylift, but again, history will not make clear what bizarre combination of racism, sentimentality and anti-communism seized America during the week the orphans rained on San Francisco. After a while, the ambiguities of the situation – to say the least – began to negate the enthusiasm with which the press originally greeted the operation; but the Left critics were always made to seem more cranky than they deserved to be, more misanthropic than their political instincts warranted.

All in all, it was as chaotic in the cable rooms of the American newspapers as it must have been on Highway 1 in South Vietnam. Rumors were dignified as stories and enshrined as unimpeachable fact, and never heard from again after the first day of release. Weinraub, for instance, told of communists firing on columns of refugees, and the network news picked it up; the story was never confirmed, but the impression of terror remained. The *Times* was still quoting anonymous "well-informed sources," "reliable Western sources," and "well-placed sources" in March, when those sources were clearly lying through their teeth. On the rare occasions the networks showed films of life in the "fallen" provinces, the pictures were underlined, and undermined, with captions warning in effect that their provenance – North Vietnam – probably invalidated them. No monitory captions alerting viewers to "South Vietnamese Films" were ever used, despite the years of unreliable material from the allied side. By now it should be obvious that when the press congratulates itself on the lessons it has learned – and taught all of us – in Vietnam, it must not be taken seriously.

[THE ELUSIVE TRUTH]

What would it be like if the press really did learn a thing or two from its long experience in Vietnam? Of course the question is academic, because the obstacles to understanding are so deeply rooted in the American psyche, that it would take something of a revolution in consciousness to remove them. But it is possible to identify some of those aspects which elude the reporter's eye and escape the editor's pencil, that might make all the difference in the way Americans see the world.

First, the press should have learned that revolution is not the same as civil war, and not at all equivalent to imperial invasion. Vietnam is a country in the throes of a long revolution, distorted and extended by successive forays of colonial invaders, but never losing its original character as developed by Ho Chi Minh and his compatriots half a century ago. Liberal journalists who liked the notion of "civil war" understood that character no better than hard-liners who insisted on the "invasion from the North" theory. It is no accident, as they say in Ho Chi Minh City, that the bulk of the Vietnamese refugees who made it to the United States are from the middle and upper classes which the United States came to Vietnam to "protect." Class warfare, of course, does not roll trippingly off the typewriter of any American correspondent, and if it did, it would be greeted with uncomprehending stares back at the home office. But not to know that the Vietnamese war was at least partly a war of Vietnamese classes is to be in an intellectual quagmire from which there is no rescue.

Second, the press should have learned that America's racial and cultural chauvinism ill-equips Americans to spend much time abroad, on missions of good will or military assistance. Vietnamese nationalism is an essential ingredient of the Vietnamese revolution; even America's puppets resented the way the soldiers and diplomats sent out from Washington bullied ally and enemy alike, debased the quality of Vietnamese life, corrupted an entire population and squandered billions recreating the empty pleasures of the slums and suburbs of America over there. From kill-ratios to the orphan evacuation, a current of unexamined racism courses through what President Ford now calls the American experience in Vietnam. "Life is cheap in the Orient," General Westmoreland said. That is, it is cheap in the eyes of Americans, which is a good enough reason in itself for staying out.

Finally, the press should have learned – and might still learn – that war and world politics are not board games, despite the popularity of Diplomacy and the like. There are still daily stories speculating on the relative tilt of Hanoi to Peking or Moscow. But Hanoi-watching and related pastimes are utterly useless in deciphering the conduct of international conflict and revolutions in this day and age. That, of course, is what Henry Kissinger was all about, and his failure is not occasioned simply by the defeat of a specific policy. Rather, the end of America's presence in Indochina is a defeat for the concept of Kissinger's policy – the personal manipulation of diplomatic options without regard to the urgent needs of the people affected by them. Kissinger has failed in the Middle East because he trivializes the Palestinian struggle. He failed in Indochina because he pretended he could parlay a spirit of cameraderie with Le Duc Th. into a permanent presidency for Nguyen Van Thieu. It may even be true that the diplomats of Russia and China encouraged him in that pretense. If so, they all were wrong. The spirit of the people is not only greater than the Man's technology; it is greater than His diplomacy, too.

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Reconstruction and Reconciliation: A Call

[RECONCILIATION]

The United States never had an ambassador in Vietnam who could say "hello" in Vietnamese. We never had a decision-maker there who spoke Vietnamese. The only one who even tried was Robert McNamara. He learned how to say "Long Live Vietnam!" But when he made his speech at the Kennedy Square in Saigon, he got the tones mixed up. He raised his arms in the victory symbol before the 30,000 high school students who had been ordered there to listen and cheer. He began shouting in Vietnamese, not "Long Live Vietnam," but "The Southern Duck Wants to Lie Down." Our officials could never get the intonation right.

Now the war is over; the future of Vietnam is at last in the hands of people speaking the language of their own country. The U.S. has been forced to accept the military success of the Vietnamese revolution; how long will it take to accept it politically?

In May 1975, two diplomats of the new South Vietnamese government, Pham Thanh Van and Phan Thi Minh, were refused permission to attend a conference at the United Nations. The U.S. would not give the two women permission to land at a New York airport. By contrast, hundreds of Americans have been warmly greeted in North Vietnam. And not just anti-war types. Walter Cronkite was there to interview the POWs when they were released in 1973. Even Henry Kissinger was there, visiting the Museum of History and the Unification Park as well as discussing the meaning of the Paris Peace Agreements. It is time to reciprocate.

Yet the U.S. continues to bar access even to essential humanitarian aid and medical expertise. For example, venereal disease had a very low incidence in South Vietnam until the U.S. GIs arrived. Then it increased dramatically. Many Vietnamese women used very low dosages of penicillin and certain strains of VD developed resistance to it. Some of the best research to develop alternative cures is being done in Atlanta, Georgia, and at other public health research labs in the U.S. Yet Vietnamese doctors can no longer visit these centers to share knowledge. Nor can Vietnamese cancer specialists visit Harvard Medical Center and other places that have studied the effects of herbicides on human health. We sprayed the land and people of Vietnam with tons of chemicals and now refuse to share with their scientists the results of our research.

At a minimum, diplomatic relations should be established with Vietnam. Vietnamese officials of both the Revolutionary Government in the south and the Democratic Republic in the north have made it clear that they would like a normalization of relations with the U.S. One irony is that many of the Vietnamese refugees here now want to go home, yet there is no direct way for them to get new passports or even to discuss procedures for returning. Surely it is time for us to demand that our government immediately proceed to recognize both Vietnams, and Cambodia as well.

It is time, too, for reconciliation here at home. There are nearly a million Americans in need of amnesty. President Ford dramatically invited 150,000 Vietnamese to the U.S., including many who did not obey their own country's draft laws. Why the double standard? Why has our government required that young Americans confess guilt and perform some national service of our government's choice for protesting a war that almost everyone agrees was wrong? Robert McNamara was not asked to admit guilt for planning the destruction – he was made head of the World Bank. Nor was McGeorge Bundy – he now heads the Ford Foundation. It is time for universal, unconditional amnesty. Congress can grant that amnesty and so can the president. Their offices should be deluged with letters demanding that Americans who cared enough about life, both here and in Vietnam, should be granted amnesty. No responsible official should be allowed to appear in public without being questioned on this subject.

[RECONSTRUCTION]

It is time for reconstruction of Vietnam. We dropped 25 million bombs on that country – more than were dropped on Europe, Africa and Asia in World War II and the Korean War combined. They pock-marked the land and flattened the factories. They burned people's homes and destroyed their schools, churches and hospitals.

There remain such U.S. legacies as "Butterfly" bomblets

by Don Luce

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scattered by the thousands in the rural areas North and South. There is not enough explosive power in one of these butterfly-shaped devices to kill a person, but they will shear off the bottom twelve inches of a leg. Each year a new wooden leg must be fitted to the victim – each year for the next 50 years.

In 1970, I took two U.S. congressional representatives (Augustus Hawkins of Los Angeles and William Anderson of Tennessee) to the Tiger Cages of Con Son Island. Hidden between the walls of the prison, we found 480 men and women. The photos of a paralyzed Buddhist monk and a 71-year-old woman, blinded by caustic lime thrown into the cages as a disciplinary measure, were printed in U.S. newspapers. America was shocked. Then Saigon promised to do away with the cages. Two months later, the political prisoners were ordered to build themselves new ones as a "self-help" project. When the prisoners refused to build their own Tiger Cages, they were thrown back into shackles. On January 7, 1971, the U.S. Department of the Navy awarded a $400,000 contract to Raymond, Morrison, Knudsen-Brown, Root and Jones to build 384 new "isolation cells" to replace the Tiger Cages, using money channeled through the U.S. Food for Peace program. The new cages were constructed exactly like the old ones (built by the French in 1939) except that they were two square feet smaller. When a few political prisoners were released by the Thieu regime from the U.S.-built cages, *Time* magazine wrote, "It is not really proper to call them men anymore. 'Shapes' is a better word – grotesque sculptures of scarred flesh and gnarled limbs."

Now the prisoners are free. As Saigon's army retreated, local people went to the prisons and demanded that the gates be opened. The jailers, ready now to be part of the revolution, joined with prisoners and townspeople to tear down the prison walls. Altogether some two hundred thousand political prisoners were jailed with American tax money. Many are now paralyzed from long periods of shackling and torture; others suffer from malaria, tuberculosis, eye and skin diseases, and malnutrition.

Most of the damage can be repaired. The paralyzed, given the right treatment, can walk again. Clergy and Laity Concerned, an interfaith peace organization, is sponsoring a program to furnish ex-prisoners with antibiotics, medicines for skin and eye diseases, anti-malaria pills, and special equipment for the rehabilitation of atrophied muscles.

For its part, the U.S. government is refusing to honor Article 21 of the Paris Peace Agreement which commits the U.S. to provide rehabilitation aid to Indochina. Vietnam and Cambodia have been placed on the "Z list" which, under the Export Administration Act of 1969, makes it illegal to trade with or send relief materials to them. Several groups are challenging this edict and sending emergency assistance for the resettlement of millions of Vietnamese farm people for food and medical supplies, for the detection and defusing of thousands of tons of unexploded bombs and mines, and for aid to the released political prisoners. Three such groups are: American Friends Service Committee, 160 N. 15th Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19102; Clergy and Laity Concerned, 235 E. 49th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017; and Medical Aid for Vietnam, 65A Winthrop Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

[A TIME TO LEARN]

Looking ahead, it is time for America to learn the lessons of Vietnam, to re-evaluate the premises and practice of its foreign policy. At the time of the cyclamate scandal in the U.S., condemned crates of diet soft drinks were sent to Vietnam and Laos as aid to starving refugees. It was a handy tax write off for the manufacturers and probably had short-term political value for the Americans who handed it out. It was certainly of no value to the refugees who drank it. This is, in miniature, the story of American foreign policy.

It is time for the people of this country to begin to understand what is done abroad in their name. Daniel Ellsberg put it well: it is a tribute to the American people that administration after administration found it necessary to lie to them. The planners in Washington have until now succeeded in casting their international policies in terms of American idealism – foreign aid to "feed the hungry"; political and military alliances to "defend freedom." Policies developed with the advice and informed consent of the American people could begin to reflect those ideals

There should be debate on the uses of foreign aid, which must be directed toward helping the poor rather than widening the gap between rich and poor. (The much heralded "Green Revolution," for example, helps rich farmers because they are the only ones who can afford the fertilizers, insecticides and irrigation necessary for the delicate but high-yield "miracle" grains.) There should also be debate on U.S. political and military alliances. Should we, for example, keep 40,000 American soldiers in South Korea, while the government of Park Chung Hee continues its policies of unrelenting political repression? The shock of Vietnam has thrown past U.S. policies into question. This is an historic chance to arrive at new answers.

[AN AGENDA FOR AMERICA]

Extend full diplomatic recognition to Cambodia and to both Vietnams, and allow their representatives to come to New York on United Nations business.

Implement Article 21 of the Paris Peace Accord, which states that "the United States will contribute to healing the wounds of war and to post-war reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and . . . Indochina."

Grant universal unconditional amnesty for those who resisted the draft and deserted the armed forces.

Establish a firm policy of not giving material or military aid to countries that imprison their citizens for political reasons. End the practice of using "Food for Peace" for military or political ends.

Slash the military budget to halt the arms race and the endless stockpiling of unnecessary armaments.

Rejoice! The war is over. Let us insure that there are no more Vietnams.

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The Privilege of Violence

"A person who bombs villages, or merely helps a scientist perform an experiment which makes helpless subjects cry out in pain, can hardly be impotent. He need not be killed or imprisoned when his services are no longer required—he is just annulled."

The prevailing public attitude toward violence in North America is paradoxical. That violence should be widely feared and publicly condemned is rational enough; one would wish, certainly, that it were even more strongly and, especially, more consistently, condemned. There have been no atrocities committed in war different in kind from those Euripides recounts in *The Trojan Women.* Sacking and burning cities, raping the survivors and carrying them enslaved into exile, murdering children for political ends—all this still pretty well exhausts the possibilities. But we do it with so much more efficiency, and on so much larger a scale, that the present era is incontestably the most violent in history.

Nearly all the unprecedented violence that distinguishes our time is committed by agents of the national state, covertly or overtly. The state's virtual monopoly on violence exists, and enjoys public support, at all levels of action. It is very difficult to obtain the conviction of a policeman for beating or slaying anyone, even if he is off duty; his position as a peace officer is a license to kill with little legal jeopardy. Conversely, even those states which have abolished capital punishment have been obliged by public pressure to restore it as a penalty for persons convicted of slaying a police officer or a prison guard.

At the other end of the geographical scale that runs from neighborhood to globe, since World War II there appear to have been *no* local, internalized struggles between socialist and capitalist-oriented forces in which the United States did not intervene, whether by direct military intervention or by funding right-wing governments or insurgents. None of these conflicts or countries constituted a threat to anything in America but its opportunities for foreign investment. This is not a pretty story, but it is hardly unique or even peculiarly discreditable. Many governments have been totally ruthless in advancing what its elites conceive to be their interests. But it does seem remarkable, in view of the record, that anyone could doubt that the state is the source of nearly all the violence in the world. Nobody else has the resources.

At the same time persons who undertake acts of violence without at least covert authorization from the state evoke from it repressive violence on a scale totally disproportionate to their assault. The public, however, does not regard the violence of the state as violence at all. It becomes not merely legitimate—even when, as in the Indochina war, the state abrogates its own constitutional processes for legitimating it—but largely invisible, or, in any case, to a majority of the people, negligible.

by Edgar Z. Friedenberg

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Moreover, and more precisely, it is just that portion of the public that is most insistent upon eliminating violence from society and restoring law 'n' order which is also least willing or able to acknowledge that the state is itself the source of violence in the world. It is they who are most eager, as the experience of the war resistance movement in the United States has shown, to unleash the violence of the state on those who are clearly trying to limit that violence, but who are perceived as disorderly. Again, let us note precisely the nature of the paradox. It is not astonishing that a man who conceives himself to be a patriot should respond with anger and hatred to young men who resist the draft and impugn the nation's motives. It is not astonishing that, in his anger and hatred, he should become violent and advocate violence. But it *is* astonishing that he should continue to regard himself as a man dedicated to the maintenance of peace and order, at home and abroad.

Some of the reasons for this disturbing inconsistency are clear enough. Much of it is surely a classic example of an ideology that justifies the actions the state would have taken anyway in support of its dominant economic interests. Some of it is characteristic of the authoritarian personality which, at all times and places, projects its own violence and destructiveness on others while seeing itself as a paragon of order. Some of it is perhaps attributable to ignorance and an utter lack of understanding of American foreign policy and its role in the world. But ignorance of things that are both vitally important and publicly reported requires explanation in itself. The bombardiers whose daily mission (missionaries bear watching) was to kill children, among others, saw Benjamin Spock, rather than themselves, as a man of violence. So, largely, did their fellow citizens.

[THE VIOLENCE EXPERIMENT]

In seeking to understand this remarkable astigmatism, in which deeds of equal blackness appear so different and evoke such different responses, if sanctioned by the authority of the state, some of the most useful evidence is provided by Stanley Milgram's well-known study of *Obedience to Authority* (New York, Harper and Row, 1974). What makes this investigation so pertinent is the fact that, in Milgram's procedure, the authority that his subjects so willingly chose to obey was wholly spurious and, indeed, offered no more credentials to support its demands than the familiar scientists' white coat of TV commercials. In a sense, therefore, he was studying contempt for authority rather than respect for it, just as a devotee of *Ripple* or *Thunderbird* may be said to be contemptuous of wine.

Milgram, it will be recalled, enlisted the aid of volunteers in an experiment that required them to administer apparently agonizing and dangerous shocks to a group of experimental subjects. The scientist who recruited the volunteers was quite unknown to the helpers he enlisted, and he gave them only the sketchiest explanation of what the experiment was about. They continued, nevertheless, to carry out his instructions even when informed that doing so might endanger the life of a subject. They asked only questions like, "if he dies, who will be responsible?" and accepted Milgram's assurance that *he* would be. Once he said he would take responsibility for the results, some two-thirds of his volunteers continued to participate, demanding no credentials whatever of Milgram himself.

In fact, these assistants were the real subjects of the experiment; the supposed victims were Milgram's well-rehearsed confederates; and no shocks were actually administered to anyone. The experiment was a fake. This fact has led some critics to condemn Milgram for behaving toward his actual subjects (i.e., the volunteers) as cruelly and dehumanizingly as they behaved, or were willing to behave, toward the people to whom they believed they were administering electroshock. I find this reasoning specious, since to deliberately administer to a harmless stranger a treatment that one has reason to believe is both agonizing and dangerous is quite different from leading people into a situation in which they may – or may not – reveal their own moral deficiencies and be forced to confront them. Milgram's experimental design was irritatingly godlike or at least ducal – he did to his volunteers just what the Duke did to Angelo in *Measure for Measure*. But the pain and humiliation some of them felt when they were told what, in fact, they had done was not the result of their having been treated as objects but of their realizing that they had *acted* like objects, placing themselves entirely in the scientists' hands.

Such behavior is easily condemned as fanatical respect for authority. In fact, it shows little or no such respect. Conceivably, a genuinely fanatical Christian might patronize a whorehouse, but he would not, unless exceptionally perverse, fall on his knees and worship there if he found the walls hung with Pietas and paintings of the Annunciation. Their presence would displease him, and would hardly lead him to suppose that his hostesses were consecrated. Similarly, people who respect authority strongly may be expected to be sensitive to its abuse or impersonation. But most of Dr. Milgram's volunteers derived such substantial reassurance from feeling that their actions were *authorized* that they did not even question whether he had the power to hold them harmless from the legal – much less the moral – sanctions to which their participation in his experiment might subject them.

If Milgram's volunteers had been sadistic, or had stood to benefit in any way from their participation in the experiment, their response would not have seemed paradoxical. We are all doubtless capable of rationalizing conduct that we find advantageous if ethically dubious; and appeal to authority is one of the commonest forms of justification. But none of them were sadists; all were disinterested. They had nothing to gain in the usual sense by assisting Dr. Milgram in his human experiment. And most of them showed serious doubts and appeared to be disturbed about their task as the experiment progressed and the outcries of Milgram's confederates grew more shrill. When Milgram absented himself from the laboratory briefly, in a part of the experiment designed to see if his assistants would feel freer to refuse his directions when he was not actually present to observe their insubordination, many of them did so, "fudging" their instructions in order to spare the experimental "subjects" some of the pain they were supposedly inflicting on them.

Why, then, did not most of the people Milgram ap-

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"What the heroes of such dramas seek is an assurance that their violence makes them potent, without their having to assume moral responsibility. Authority grants them the one vitality they possess. And when it fails them, they are as good as dead."

proached simply decline after raising questions about the experiment, or at least drop out of it early on, when they perceived that they were being used as torturers? How could the idea that Milgram had the authority to exonerate them from their own scruples have provided them with any solace? How could it even have appeared relevant to their concerns, when they disliked what they were doing and could expect no tangible reward for doing it? Obviously, this is a question with the broadest possible implications. It is as applicable to most of those involved in Watergate, whose interests certainly did not coincide with those of the President and who ought to have had no illusions about his willingness or power to "cover for them." And it is applicable to the participants in a psychological experiment.

One reason that this question seems puzzling is, I believe, because I may be asking it the wrong way around. I have been asking, in effect, how people can suppose that any authority can assume their burden of guilt and responsibility for actions that they themselves believe to be wrong, so that they do not, for example, even recognize their violence as violence. But this may not be the most useful question to raise. If one asks, instead, whether the sense that one is carrying out orders that one knows to be destructive can be positively exhilarating in itself – and, if so, under what circumstances – then the answer may be more informative.

The highest personal cost of being socialized to accept the prescriptions and proscriptions of other persons, whether individual or corporate, of our actions and our roles is a pervasive sense of impotence and of existential guilt. All socialization is thus alienating to some degree. But for most members of a mass society, who can survive economically only by fulfilling fragmented routines designated by others, alienation and a sense of chronic self-betrayal at having surrendered one's selfhood may be a constant dull torment. That torment is somewhat eased, however, if one feels that what one is required to do has powerful and significant consequences, even though it was not done spontaneously. A man who bombs villages, or merely helps a scientist to perform an experiment that hurts helpless subjects enough to make them cry out, can hardly be impotent. But he is subject to being rendered inoperative by the authority he serves, he need not be killed or imprisoned when his services are no longer required – he is just annulled.

Ironically, then, Dr. Milgram's volunteers learned that they had, after all, been participating in a psychological experiment so designed that it must inevitably cause pain to its subjects – themselves. When the project was subsequently explained, what humiliated them was not just the unpleasant discovery that they were capable of knowingly inflicting pain on a fellow-human who could not possibly harm them. It was the more serious revelation that their agency had been illusory; that they, indeed, were the only people in the experimental situation who had been acting without a will or purpose of their own; and that this was not a very unusual occurence for them – they had not even noticed it at the time.

What they had gotten out of their participation, albeit fleetingly, was a sense of having been turned on: a false but comforting assurance that the scientist, by virtue of his authority, could make them somebody despite the surrender of their will – or rather because of it. This dynamic also explains, I believe, why most of the Watergate miscreants seem not to be evil men – not up to being evil men, however evil their deeds. Neither, of course, do the bombardiers of Indochina – in contrast to the North Vietnamese who tortured them when captured and who, being driven by personal hatred, seem rather more human than their victims. They appear, rather, like *poltergeists*, malign spirits driven to create a disturbance in order to assert that they exist. This assertion is not the least of their perjuries.

To the extent that each of us has yielded, or failed to develop, his potential for self-actualization and accepted a pattern of life that makes us the instrument of circumstances or of other person's purposes while our own remain unrealized, we will yearn for authority and be uncritical of its claims. Existential self-betrayal is peculiarly debilitating because it is a cardinal sin of which it is almost impossible to repent. Those who commit it do not realize that they have unless they are apprehended for a related offense which they did not will, and of which they feel innocent. Egil Krogh did not mean to commit burglary; neither Calley nor Eichmann wished to harm any man, woman or child. Their *willful* act, and hence their sin, was the abandonment of their will – and that seldom feels like a willful act. But it leaves those who commit it dependent thereafter on external sources for a *raison d'etre*, and as credulous of authority as the damned would be of a rumoured fountain of holy water that provided automatic absolution.

It also leaves them filled with malice and hatred toward persons less compromised than themselves. These are often identified by their spontaneity and authentic moral commitment, which, though no assurance of salvation, do establish that damnation has not yet occured. If the authority of the state suffices to make its violence appear, paradoxically, as a simulacrum of life-giving force, the exuberance of those who retain a sense of their own moral presence must arouse the meanest sort of fear and envy. The spontaneous actions of these people must be defined as violent. The Catonsville Nine spilled blood; they brought jars of it from a slaughterhouse to the draft-board office for

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that purpose. What could be more violent than that?

This hatred of spontaneity is, I believe, one factor – though the seductive vagueness of the law is a more powerful one – in the eagerness of the Nixon administration to charge the peace movement with conspiracy, thereby maintaining that the actions of its members do not reflect their personal and individual views, but those of a hypothetical seducer. There has been conformity and coercion enough even in the peace movement. There has been even more conformity in its surviving fragments, which have reason to be paranoid even though the realities of government surveillance and fraud have outstripped any possible fantasy. No one, however, has protested in self-extenuation that he was just doing a job or following orders.

[THE CONFLICT]

There is, then, built into society a profound and deeply felt conflict between those whose pride depends on their conviction that they are ethically autonomous and responsive to the presence of other persons; and those who pride themselves instead on their self-discipline and self-renunciation in doing, realistically, what their job or social role demands, however this may affect the people they act upon. It is also clear that society as it is organized requires millions of the latter and that its institutions mould them to serve; while it can barely tolerate the former, and does not do so when it can find grounds for isolating or repressing them. This generalization holds true, generally speaking, despite its obvious oversimplification. To be sure, the world is not divided into ethically autonomous people on the one hand and apparatchikis on the other. And if it were, this division would not correspond to good guys and bad, or political Left and Right. But people do, I believe, tend to identify themselves with certain significant modalities: men and women; straights and gays; blacks and whites. We are not all simply ranged along a continuum or huddled under a bell-shaped curve. And the difference between the people in the two "humps" is in each case partly qualitative and not just scalar.

It is always necessary and usually possible to work out a modus vivendi between people in different humps. But this does not imply that the conflicts between them are the result of misunderstanding or poor communication. They are real, and do not go away if ignored. Undoubtedly, the most effective mechanism for reducing social conflict is to transfer it from the external social scene to the psyches of individuals and let them take the strain off the body politic. This mechanism is what liberal democracy relies on most heavily to abort conflict between social groups and especially, social classes, establishing the struggle within the self, instead. Rich and poor, black and white, old and young, men and women–each of these is left with a sense of self-denial and self-abuse, for the sake of the social order. This, precisely, *is* the political process. Conversely, even behavior as ugly and indefensible as that of the south Boston whites in their fall 1974 demonstrations against bussing must surely have made them feel less guilty rather than more. What is regrettable is the *fact* of their bigotry more than their candor in expressing it. The authorities in Boston, for their part, should have responded with a genuine sense of outrage at the contempt the whites were showing for the rights of black citizens. Instead, they sought, as usual, to defuse the issue morally by taking no position of their own, except that violence and disorder should be avoided and the law, if possible, enforced. In their fear of physical confrontation–and of defeat by a furious white majority–the politicians of the area also avoided the moral confrontation demanded by the white demonstrators' sincere advocacy of evil. Massachusetts politicians seem consistently incapable of Manicheanism.

Today, most of us are. In order to fill successfully the roles that exist, we become walking though uneasy compromises among irreconcilable demands, anthologies of social behavior from which, as editors, we have omitted anything personal.

[NOTHING PERSONAL]

It has become a commonplace rather than a paradox of mass society that explicit sexuality gets films X-rated and bookstores raided for obscenity. Violence does not – provided the winner is a macho hero, a military man, law-enforcement officer, or superman who has allied himself with forces of law 'n' order, rather than a criminal or revolutionary.

Censorship is intended, of course, to prevent the validation of ideas and feelings that would threaten the stability of existing social arrangements, not so much by "putting ideas into people's heads" as by confirming those that were already there to be shared visions rather than obscene fantasies. This is enough to explain, perhaps, why entrapping or beating up suspects, for example, does not count as criminal violence for purposes of rating.

All such violence is privileged. It becomes so by its perpetrator's intent to protect society from the imputed permissiveness–equally contemptible whether attributed to corruption or constitutionality–of its law-enforcement procedures. The violence is, in fact, justified precisely because it is supposed to be supportive of society's real norms, and more effective at penetrating and cleansing hidden crevices than the law will permit itself to be. But its socially integrative effect is even stronger and more subtle.

What the heroes of such dramas seek is an assurance that their violence makes them potent, indeed dominant, factors in their situations without their having to assume moral responsibility for their purposes. Like Dr. Milgram's subjects, these police do not choose their victims actively; they are designated for them by being stigmatized as criminal and, expecially, as narcotics pushers whose crimes carry an aura of black magic. Illicit drugs as Thomas Szasz has pointed out in *Ceremonial Chemistry* (New York, Doubleday, 1974), are blasphemous as well as toxic, and threaten damnation. The police hero-victims thus even appear as apolitical: they define no values and establish no policies – they just execute them. Authority grants them the only vitality they possess. When it fails, they are as good as dead.

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Hollywood Politics:

Hearts, Minds and Money

"Politics doesn't exist in Hollywood," one producer told me. "People talk about 'saying something' in their films, but they all sell out, if they've got anything to sell out in the first place—which most of them don't."

MGM is preparing to show "That's Entertainment, Too," which presents several more hours of excerpts from movie delights of the last half century, and there are no doubt weeks full of such segments to rerun from the musicals and comedies of film history. But no studio is ready to produce "That's Politics." A movie like that would be counted a short subject: five minutes from "Gentleman's Agreement," ten from "The Strawberry Statement," two or three from "Pinky," and perhaps the titles from "The Revolutionary."

"You can count Hollywood's political movies on the fingers of one hand – if they're amputated," a film director remarked recently. And unless you broaden "politics" to include anything more serious than Busby Berkeley musicals, it is the category that Hollywood would always rather forget. With few exceptions, the idea of politics in a major motion picture these days is expressed by Barbra Streisand singing her way through a demonstration, or Robert Redford running for senator with all 32 teeth showing.

But suddenly politics is an issue in movieland, and a concern of some audiences. Big studios are planning big movies with political themes: Warner Brothers is making Hoffman and Redford into Bernstein and Woodward for "All the President's Men." Francis Ford Coppola is putting together the political disaster film of the epoch: "Apocalypse Now," starring the late war in Indochina. Sidney Lumet has finished his film about a gay liberation bank robbery, featuring Al Pacino in his first overtly homosexual role.

And then there's "Hearts and Minds," which as a non-fiction documentary does not ordinarily qualify as a Big Hollywood product, but manages to become an issue itself because of

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the "controversy" created around it. If you've missed the scenes so far, the synopsis goes like this: "Hearts and Minds" is a million-dollar documentary about the American experience of the war in Vietnam. Flashback: Bert Schneider, son and brother of Columbia Pictures execs, wins fame and fortune producing "Easy Rider," "The Last Picture Show," "Five Easy Pieces" and other gems of the New Hollywood. He signs a multi-pix deal with Columbia, and produces "Hearts and Minds" as one of that number. Cut to Peter Davis, Emmy-winning maker of the TV special, "The Selling of the Pentagon," who is the director of "Hearts and Minds." Flash forward to the Cannes Film Festival 1974, where "Hearts" wins raves, but Columbia, fearing political backlash or financial ruin, refuses to acknowledge its support and subsequently holds it in its darkest closet. Davis and Schneider then begin showing the film selectively to the sympathetic press, and public pressure mounts for its exhibition. A purchasing company (Rainbow) is formed, which buys the film from Columbia and inks a deal with Warners for distribution. Meanwhile . . .

Walt Whitman Rostow, an important interviewee in "Hearts and Minds," sees what an ass he's made of himself in the movie and gets a court order enjoining it from being shown. Warners, Rainbow, Schneider and Davis, et al. fight the injunction and get it reversed (January, 1975). The Provisional Revolutionary Government conveniently times the liberation of southern Vietnam to coincide with the distribution of the film in major markets, and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences furthers the cause by giving Schneider and Davis an Oscar. But . . .

At the Awards ceremony, Schneider breaks the custom of complete banality and blandness of the yearly event by publicly celebrating the victory of the Vietnamese revolution and, what's worse, he reads a telegram of gratitude to the American people from Dinh Ba Thi, representative of the PRG in Paris. The Academy honchos freak; Bob Hope drafts a statement of disclaimer, which Frank Sinatra reads to the live television audience over Shirley MacLaine's strong objections. Warren Beatty is upset, too.

Schneider is condemned by the conservative press and by liberal critics, too, who never wanted to consider the consequences of their "anti-war" position; William Shawn, eremite editor of *The New Yorker*, refuses to publish Penelope Gilliatt's (favorable) review of "Hearts and Minds" until she cravenly agrees to insert a long paragraph attacking Schneider's "outburst" at the Academy Awards and assuring readers that he had nothing to do with the film. And there it stands.

"Hearts and Minds" was an expensive movie to make, but the producers will be lucky if it breaks even at the box office (the rule of thumb says that it must make $3 million in gross receipts to do that). "It's doing well above a certain latitude," Director Davis told me. "In Seattle it's supposed to be the hottest movie in town." But even in New York it did not meet expectations, and at least in its initial showing in Los Angeles, it bombed. Where movies have to do well if they must gross millions – the suburban cinemas 1 through 7 – "Hearts and Minds" will probably be eaten alive by "The Love Bug."

But the critical acclaim, the Academy Award (best documentary) and the brouhaha have now made it possible for Peter Davis to make practically any movie he wants, right? Wrong: Davis is scrounging around for money for what seems like an important new political film project. "No one's offering to finance me," he said matter-of-factly.

[BANKABLE NAMES]

Documentaries don't usually make big money, but some have been winners: "Mondo Cane," "The Hellstrom Chronicle," and, of course, "Woodstock." Documentary exotica, erotica or musicals can possibly make their nut, Davis thought, but political films – ones that are shot on more than a shoestring – have trouble. Like political magazines, they need subsidies from sympathetic sources. Davis is currently checking out foundations for financing for his next effort.

But traditional sources of Movement money – the high-minded fat cats who supported the civil rights and anti-war campaigns of the '60s – have not been eager to get into the movie medium. A lawyer on the west coast who is trying to put together a $16 million money package behind Michael ("Woodstock") Wadleigh's script for an epic on the American Revolution – in time for a July 4, 1976 premiere – has decided that the well-trodden paths to Leftist bank accounts do not lead to Fat City. Some political sources of funds have been burned: Max Palevsky, who was a big investor in Rolling Stone magazine, never made money with "Marjoe" (another Academy Award winner) or "State of Siege" and although he is staying in the movie business (in association with Paramount) he is keeping away from political themes.

It is, after all, a question of profit. "I'm not aware of any executives in the industry – other than Bert Schneider – putting their money into movies other than those which will make more money," Peter Davis said. Profit is their only product. Profit is predictable, to a degree, by the names of the stars on the marquee, and to a lesser degree by the track record of the director and writer.

"If I had a political story to do – assuming I had the right people to star in it – I could do it," Bert Schneider told me. Only a few names are really "bankable," that is, guaranteed money makers on their stardom alone: Streisand, Redford, Newman, McQueen – and maybe Jane Fonda. That is an intriguing case, of course, because she is so intimately associated with radical political causes. "Don't think that Fonda isn't bankable, just because she isn't working all the time," a producer said to me not long ago. "But because Big Hollywood has changed so much, unless you've got a big name – Barbra Streisand or Robert Redford or Stanley Kubrick – interested in your project you can't do it very easily. And then, what you get is 'All the President's Men,' which is about the most radical Hollywood is going to be this year."

That's a good example, too, of how Hollywood deals with politics. Warner Brothers not only is filming the story of the Watergate investigation; the company, a division of Warner Industries, bought the paperback rights to the Woodward and Bernstein book for a cool million. Then the president of Warner Brothers went to San Clemente for an amiable chat with the President

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of the title, just to assure him that his honor would not be impeached. At least Kay Graham never went over to the White House.

"You have to start with a property," the producer told me (few of these Hollywood types agree to have their names used; paranoia runs deep, and for good reason. The vultures have good eyes). "If you start with an idea, you're in trouble." For example, Terry Malick wanted desperately to make a serious film about the culture of the '50s that produced mass murderer Charlie Starkweather and his girl friend/accomplice Caril Fugate. The film was, in a reasonable sense, political: it sought to describe an American era for its social and economic content, not simply as a collection of personal vignettes or nostalgic romances (viz: "American Graffiti"). Malick got up his low budget, with help from the American Film Institute, made his film, and sold it to Warner Brothers, where it promptly sank. It will be hard to prove that either Malick or his idea is "bankable" anymore.

But things *are* different in Hollywood, despite business-as-usual when it comes to profits. At least there is no blacklist, the system of exclusion of liberals and radicals which operated in a Red-baited movie industry during the late '40s and '50s. "The way we were then is not the way we are now," Producer Gary Horowitz told me. Horowitz was an associate producer (with Ed Lewis) of "Executive Action," one of the few frankly Leftish feature films made in America in the last few years.

"I think what's really changed," Horowitz continued, "is not Hollywood but the country. We're having a reaction to the '60s. It's no harder to get money for a political film than for other films, but it's not any easier, either. The standard is 'will it make money?' The problem with political films is that they often don't make money. 'Z' made a lot of money in this country, and that fact allowed you to get financing for political films. But 'Hearts and Minds' will not make a great deal, if indeed it makes anything at all; if it made as much as 'The Sting' there would be 30 such pictures packaged next year."

In fact, the content of a film is hardly relevant these days. Unlike the dark days of the Hollywood Ten, when the lightest shade of pink in a writer's or actor's complexion was enough to send him to the compulsory closet, ideology is hardly an issue today. The package, not its content, is the message. "Controversy" itself is a saleable item now, as it used to be a drug on the market, so if a political point of view can be packaged as controversy, the studies will bring it out in their line. "Lenny" was not necessarily a film about radically obscene culture, but about "controversy"; "Executive Action" was concerned with the assassination "controversy." The ads for "Hearts and Minds" simply urge people to see "the most controversial film" about the war in Vietnam.

"I haven't heard the line that a film is 'too controversial' since my childhood," Producer Horowitz said. "In the '40s, Hollywood was all patiotic, everything was black and white, there was no point in controversy. In the '50s, there was no room for controversy; people who'd do controversial films were all blacklisted. But in the '60s, controversy became downright fashionable. Any idea is considered valuable for discussion, but not necessarily for operation. Ed Lewis went against the entire grain of the system and made "Executive Action'. The moguls said he'd ruin his career but he made a lot of money. 'Z' grossed $3 or $4 million in this country, after it had been paid for in Europe; that's very high for a foreign film: if 'Brief Vacation' does $2 million they'll be ecstatic."

[MORE POWER, LESS POLITICS]

The well-documented end of the "studio system," which became a palpable fact with Bert Schneider's phenomenal success with the independently-made "Easy Rider," has made it possible, though not inevitable, for political films to get made by interested cadre.

"The town is open," Horowitz said. But the question remains, open to what? Schneider and others are not optimistic about the quality of politics being expressed in movies, even by well-intentioned independents. "There's a lack of consciousness in people making movies," he said. "It's nothing more sinister than that."

"Politics doesn't exist in Hollywood," another producer told me. "People talk about 'saying something' in their films, but they all sell out, if they've got anything to sell out in the first place, which most of them don't."

There's the example, for instance, of Sam Peckinpah's latest project, which was supposed to be about an African diplomat kidnapped in London; people said it would have "good politics." But the exigencies of economics and the whims of star James Caan did not fit the plan. Caan wanted to stay in California and the foreign location seemed too expensive, so the entire film was rewritten to take place in San Francisco, with Nationalist Chinese replacing Africans because of the availability of labor and locations in Chinatown. It doesn't matter: Chinese, Africans – they all look alike on the balance sheet.

Many of the old blacklisted and Red-baited writers are back in Hollywood working away, but age or repression has taken its toll on their consciousness. Waldo Salt, who was hounded out of town years ago, came back with "Midnight Cowboy," and now, "Day of the Locust." Dalton Trumbo is hacking away, after years of exile. Joseph Losey makes expensive arty failures without batting an ideological eyelash.

"The thing is," Peter Davis said, "they never proved that any of those 'Communists' were able to insert anything into their movies in the old days. This generation has more power in that way, but they also have less politics." (Davis's father, a screen writer in Hollywood, was Red-baited back in the McCarthy era.)

The blacklist campaign, immortalized in the Standard Version by Redford and Streisand, was not really about ideology but about political action. Red "influence" in the movies was the way radicals and liberals were repressed, as an example to business and the public. Hollywood simply was more vulnerable than other industries: both because it employed a number of "intellectuals" who could be expected to be politically active in an activist decade, and because the studios feared adverse publicity of any kind.

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But in the '60s, the Un-American Activities Committee was unable to keep the Left out of movies for the same reasons it was unable to make much headway against the New Left: political controversy was big at the box office. Abbie and Jerry were making a fortune with their antics (in published form) as they were hauled before HUAC. Fonda won the Academy Award (for "Klute") when she was already a radical. The old ad man's adage is truer now than ever: there's no such thing as "bad" publicity. Just spell my name right.

So whether or not Left politics is going to be expressed in Hollywood depends on fashion, rather than struggle. Other kinds of politics seem to be doing all right. The *oeuvre* of John Wayne, for example, comprises a political document of enormous impact. Wayne's presentation of the stereotypes of authority, machismo and violence that pervade American society can hardly be erased by one or two liberal films about liberation, love and sharing. Sexism and corruption abound in films. Some writers, like John Milius ("Dirty Harry," "Dillinger") have found success as scribes of neo-fascism, a trendy kind of rugged individualism that ennobles all the values that the radical movements and liberal letterwriters have been condemning for years. Milius's latest saga is "The Wind and the Lion," a celebration of the romance of Teddy Roosevelt's imperialism. He is reported to be one of the writers for Coppola's "Apocalypse Now," which will give audiences a concise perspective on the wars in Asia.

All films, of course, are political, in that they exert a force on consciousness, whether it reinforces status quo values or encourages change. In that sense, some of the most political films of the past few years make no special point about governmental or social policies, but take certain cultural lines that audiences have, from time to time, taken to be revolutionary. "The Graduate" and "Midnight Cowboy" perhaps employed a style and described moods that made Dustin Hoffman a political personality. Bert Schneider's "New Hollywood" pushed a kind of hip, drop-out alienation that was a current of the counterculture of the '60s. Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland's films – "Klute," "Steelyard Blues," "M.A.S.H." – were mildly concerned with women's issues, class and war.

There is, in fact, a small collection of Hollywood stars and near-stars who constitute a newish Left: the aforementioned Fonda and Sutherland, Shirley MacLaine (who has made a loving documentary about her trip to China, as Fonda made one of her trip to North Vietnam), Warren Beatty, Brando, Jon Voight (who starred in what may be one of the worst films, and the worst political films of all time, "The Revolutionary").

Others are involved in one or another issues: Robert Towne's script for "Chinatown" grew out of his involvement in an environmentalist campaign to protect Los Angeles' Santa Monica Mountains. Steve Shagin ("Save the Tiger") is a famous letterwriter to local publications, usually on issues of "content" in films. Streisand, Marlo Thomas, Carol Channing, and probably hundreds of their friends support more or less safe liberal causes. Robert Redford recently turned up at an anti-nuclear power teach-in.

They are not what the movie industry is about. They can indulge their politics, as they should, as long as they can return a profit. After that, the problem becomes academic. "Most of the stars who get into politics out here are useful for the crowds they can draw to rallies and for the money they can raise for causes," a show business reporter for a Los Angeles newspaper said. "In women's politics, for instance, not very many actresses seem to have more than a shallow understanding. A lot of what they do is pretty self-serving, saying what's fashionable for the interviews. The best of the political stars – Fonda and Voight, say – have the sense to allow themselves to be used to draw in the crowds.

For the most part, that shallowness shows up in their films. When the Left has to be thankful for "Executive Action" and "Steelyard Blues" as its image and voice at the movies, politics has not gained much ground. "The Boys in the Band" is still the standard film treatment of gay issues (at least until Lumet's gay bankrobbery movie is released), which is pretty dismal indeed. "Klute" and "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore" are better films, but they should not have to stand alone for Hollywood's exposure of the women's movement to America. And the good political documentaries – Haskell Wexler's "Medium Cool" (Chicago, 1968), Emile D'Antonio's "Year of the Pig" (the war in Vietnam) and "Hearts and Minds" should not be treated as shabbily by studios and distributors as they are.

In some ways, things are getting worse, too: After a period of loosening up, the studio system seems to be consolidating again on a streamlined basis. In the classic pattern of capitalist economics, the stronger operations waited for the weaker ones to slough off, and now a semi-monopolistic situation is forming. Only four or five big studios remain, and they are making huge profits with "pure entertainment" films: disasters (several new ones are in the works, including "Midway," about the World War II battle, and "Poseidon Adventure II," in which the sunken ship's passengers are caught in an avalanche on their train trip home from the last disaster), musicals, sequels to previous successes ("French Connection II" will be released later this spring).

"The pictures that make money are the blockbusters," Gary Horowitz said of the new-new Hollywood: New Hollywood II. "Who can put up a million bucks for Dustin Hoffman? No one but the major studios."

There's still room for independents – "there are guys all over the place making films," Horowitz said – but if they cannot, by and large, compete with the blockbusters, even that infant tradition may die. Some bright spots still shine: John Cassavetes finally is hitting the medium-big time with "A Woman Under the Influence," which is not only independently made, but independently produced as well. In some ways, it is the most political movie in years: not specifically in content, but in its "atmosphere," which conveys a sense of independence, honesty and naturalness that no Hollywood plastic product could ever replicate. "It's to MGM what granola was to Kellogg's," a friend in Hollywood suggested. But the analogy is as sinister as it is amusing. Look what Kellogg's did to granola.

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(From page 35)

source)." The U.S.-backed Diem regime launched a violent and bloody repression, in defiance of the Accords that we had pledged to uphold, in an effort to destroy the southern forces that had participated in defeating French colonialism. This slaughter appeared to be fairly successful, but by 1959 the former Viet Minh forces, abandoning their hope that the Geneva Accords would be implemented, returned to armed struggle, evoking the predictable wail of protest in Washington. Surely, then, this was not the period when the U.S. showed its deep concern for the right of the South Vietnamese people to self-determination.

Perhaps the *Post* is referring to the early 1960's, when U.S. officials estimated that about half the population of South Vietnam supported the National Liberation Front (NLF) and, in the words of the Pentagon Papers historian, "Only the Viet Cong had any real support and influence on a broad base in the countryside," where 80 percent of the population lived. President Kennedy dispatched U.S. forces to suppress the "subversion or rebellion" that was bringing about the collapse of the Diem regime, which was described in the Pentagon Papers as "essentially the creation of the United States." By 1962, U.S. pilots were flying 30 percent of the combat missions, attacking "Viet Cong" guerrillas and the population that supported them. The local forces organized, trained, advised and supplied by the U.S. undertook to remove more than 1/3 of the population by force to "strategic hamlets," where, in the phrase of the Administration's leading dove, Roger Hilsman, they would have a "free choice" between the Government and the Viet Cong. This magnanimous effort failed, Hilsman explains, because of inefficient police work. It was never possible to eradicate the Viet Cong political agents in the hamlets where the population was concentrated. How could a person exercise a "free choice" between the Government and the Viet Cong when the Viet Cong agents – his brothers or cousins – had not been eliminated?

Plainly, we may dismiss the possibility that this was the period in question.

After the coup that overthrew Diem in November 1963, South Vietnam was finally on its way to democracy, according to official propaganda. But this period, unfortunately, is not a likely candidate for the *Post's* award for good behavior. Through 1964 the NLF was offering a settlement on the Laotian model, with a coalition government and a neutralist program. Meanwhile the U.S. was maneuvering desperately to avoid what internal documents refer to as "premature negotiations". The reason, as explained by U.S. government scholar Douglas Pike, was that the noncommunists in South Vietnam, with the possible exception of the Buddhists, could not risk entering a coalition, "fearing that if they did the whale would swallow the minnow." As for the "Buddhists" (i.e., the politically organized Buddhist groups), General Westmoreland explained in September of that year they were not acting "in the interests of the Nation." As Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge later saw it, according to the Pentagon historian, the Buddhists were "equivalent to card-carrying Communists." The United States' position was that the two substantial political forces in the south, the southern whale and the Buddhists, must be prevented from deciding on their own form of government and social order. Only the U.S. understood "the interests of the Nation." Thus the U.S. tried to nourish its minnow, which at that point, was General Khanh and the Armed Forces Council. As Ambassador Lodge explained, the generals are "all we have got." "The Armed forces," Ambassador Maxwell Taylor elaborated, "were the only component of Vietnamese society which could serve as a stabilizing force."

By January 1965, even the minnow was slipping from the American grasp. According to Ambassador Taylor's memoirs,[4] "the U.S. government had lost confidence in Khanh" by late January 1965. Khanh, he writes, "was a great disappointment." He might have been "the George Washington of his country," but he lacked "character and integrity," and was therefore told to get lost a few weeks later. Khanh's lack of character and integrity was clearly revealed that fateful January. He was moving then towards "a dangerous Khanh-Buddhist alliance which might eventually lead to an unfriendly government with which we could not work," Taylor explained.

Actually there was more to it than that. Khanh apparently was also close to a political settlement with the NLF. Speaking in Paris on "South Vietnam day" (January 26, 1975), General Khanh stated, as he had before, that "foreign interference" aborted his "hopes for national reconciliation and concord between the belligerent parties in South Vietnam" ten years earlier. In support of this contention, he released the text of a letter sent to him on January 28, 1965 by Huynh Tan Phat, then Vice-President of the Central Committee of the NLF, in reply to an earlier letter of Khanh's. Phat affirmed his support for Khanh's express demand that "the U.S. must let South Vietnam settle the problems of South Vietnam" and his stand "against foreign intervention in South Vietnam's domestic affairs." He expressed the willingness of the NLF to join Khanh in "combat for national sovereignty and independence, and against foreign intervention." These negotiations would have led to unity against the U.S. and an end to the war, Khanh stated. But within a month of this interchange, "I was forced to leave my country, as a result of foreign pressure."

In late January, according to the Pentagon Papers, General Westmoreland "obtained his first authority to use U.S. forces for combat within South Vietnam," including "authority to use U.S. jet aircraft in a strike role in emergencies" (three years after U.S. pilots began to participate in the bombing of South Vietnam; Roger Hilsman, for example, describes the bombing of a Vietnamese village by U.S.-piloted planes in January 1962, after they had hit a Cambodian village in a "tragic error," with civilian casualties in both cases). The timing was not accidental. To avert a political settlement among South Vietnamese, the U.S. undertook the regular systematic bombing of South Vietnam in February (at more than triple the level of the more publicized bombing of the North), and not long after, an American expeditionary force invaded South Vietnam.

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In short, the period from the Diem coup to the outright U.S. aggression of early 1965 can hardly be described as a time when the U.S. acted on its early impulse to help the people of South Vietnam to decide their own future.

What about the period after February 1965? Here, the question is merely obscene.

[WHERE DID WE GO WRONG?]

In January 1973, Nixon and Kissinger were compelled to accept the peace proposals that they had sought to modify the preceding November, after the presidential elections. Perhaps this marks the beginning of the period to which the *Post* editors are referring. Again, the facts, to which I will return, demonstrate clearly that this cannot be the period in question.

It must be, then, that the last days of the war mark the period when the U.S. sought to contribute to self-determination in South Vietnam. In fact, the editors of the *Post* tell us that "The last stage of an era-long American involvement in Vietnam was distinctive . . . because during that brief stage the United States acted with notable responsibility and care," removing Americans and thousands of Vietnamese. "The United States also, in the last days, made what seems to us an entirely genuine and selfless attempt to facilitate a political solution that would spare the Vietnamese further suffering."

Very touching. Granting, for the sake of discussion, the sincerity of this genuine and selfless attempt, this certainly proves that our involvement in Vietnam was a mixture of good and evil, and that "some part of the purpose of [U.S.] policy was right and defensible," specifically, our early impulse to help the people of South Vietnam "to decide on their own form of government and social order." Let the debate go forward, then, without recriminations and with insight and honesty, as we proceed to bind up the nation's wounds, recognizing that we are capable of tragic error, but insisting on our "good impulses" which "came to be transmuted into bad policy" by some irony of history.

The U.S. government was defeated in Vietnam, but only bruised at home. Its intellectual elite is therefore free to interpret recent history without any need for self-examination.

In the current flood of essays on "the lessons of Vietnam," one finds very little honest self-appraisal. James Reston explains "the truth" about the recent disaster in the following terms:

> *The truth is that the United States Government, in addition to its own mistakes, was deceived by both the North Vietnamese, who broke the Paris agreements, and by the South Vietnamese, who broke the Paris agreements, and then gave up most of their country without advance notice. (N.Y. Times,* April 4).

The United States commits mistakes, but the Vietnamese – North and South – are guilty of crimes, breaking agreements that they had undertaken to uphold. The facts are a little different. As the Paris Agreements were signed, the White House announced that it would reject every major principle expressed in the scrap of paper that the U.S. was forced to sign in Paris.

The Agreements recognized two parallel and equivalent governments in South Vietnam, the Saigon regime and the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG), and required that the U.S. refrain from imposing any political tendency or personality on the people of South Vietnam. These two "parties" were to reach a political accommodation under conditions of democratic freedom, within a political framework in which "neutralists" would also play a role, then moving towards reunification of Vietnam.

But even before the Agreements were signed, Kissinger and Nixon announced that the U.S. would recognize one of these two parties as the sole legitimate government of South Vietnam, with its constitutional structure – which outlawed the other party – intact and unchanged. And the United States proceeded to support the Thieu regime in its announced efforts to undermine the Agreements by massive repression within its domains and military action to conquer the remainder of South Vietnam. In the summer of 1974, U.S. officials expressed their great pleasure at the success of these efforts, noting that the Thieu regime had succeeded in conquering some 15 percent of the territory administered by the PRG, making effective use of the enormous advantage in firepower it enjoyed thanks to the bounty of the U.S. They looked forward with enthusiasm to still further successes.[5]

But none of this counts as an American violation of the Paris Agreements. It is only the bad Vietnamese, North and South, who are guilty of such crimes. That is a matter of doctrine. Facts are irrelevant.

Furthermore, "our Vietnamese" not only broke the Paris Agreements, but also gave up most of their country without giving us advance notice. Reston complains that "the Thieu Government didn't even give Mr. Ford a chance to be fair at the end. It just ordered the retreat, called in the television cameras, and blamed America for the human wreckage of its own failures." How ungrateful and unworthy are these Vietnamese. Ford, in his innocence, was again deceived:

> *[Ford] was almost unfair to his own country. For he left the impression somehow the United States was responsible for the carnage in Southeast Asia . . . .*

That we should be so falsely accused . . . .

After many years, one expects nothing different from this worthy pundit. Let us turn, then, to the *Times'* most outspoken dove, Anthony Lewis, a serious and effective critic of the war in the 1970s. Summing up the history of the war, he concludes:

> *The early American decisions on Indochina can be regarded as blundering efforts to do good. But by 1969 it was clear to most of the world – and most Americans – that the intervention had been a disastrous mistake.*

Congress and most of the American people "know now that intervention in Southeast Asia was a mistake from the beginning," "that the idea of building a nation on the American model in South Vietnam was a delusion," "that it did not work and that no amount of arms or dollars or blood

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could ever make it work." Only Ford and Kissinger have failed to learn "the lessons of folly." The lesson of Vietnam is that "deceit does not pay; it may have worked in some other century or some other country, but in the United States at the end of the twentieth century it cannot." Thus "a crucial element at the end was the same one that caused disaster all along: deception by American officials – deception of others and ourselves." This should "afford insight into what went wrong in general." He quotes with approval the judgment of the London *Sunday Times:* "The massive lies involved in the Asian policy have done as much to damage American society and America's reputation as the failure of the policy itself" (*N.Y. Times,* April 21, 24, May 1).

The lesson, then, is that we should avoid mistakes and lies, and keep to policies that succeed and are honestly portrayed. If only our early efforts to do good had not been so "blundering," they would have been legitimate. This includes, one must assume, such efforts to do good as our support for the Diemist repression after 1954, or the combat operations of the early 1960s by U.S. forces and the troops they trained and controlled, or the strategic hamlet program, or the bombing of more than a hundred thousand montagnards into "safe areas" in 1962, and on, and on. Recall Bernard Fall's estimate that by April 1965, before the first North Vietnamese battalion was detected in the South, more than 160,000 "Viet Cong" had fallen "under the crushing weight of American armor, napalm, jet bombers and, finally, vomiting gases."[6] But all of these were "blundering efforts to do good," though *by 1969* we should have seen that the "intervention" was a "disastrous mistake."

Finally, consider the thoughts of TRB (Richard Strout), the regular commentator of the *New Republic* (April 25). He writes from Paris where he has been visiting monuments that record Hitler's crimes. The emotional impact is overwhelming: "I hated the maniac Hitler crew; I could never forgive the Germans." But, he continues, "other nations have lost their senses too; was this not the land of the guillotine? And then, of course, I thought of Vietnam."

At last, someone is willing to contemplate the *criminal* nature of the American war. But not for long. The next sentence reads: "It was not wickedness; it was stupidity." It was "one of the greatest blunders of our history." There is a message: "watching the long tragedy in living color has been a chastening experience but the act of bravery is to face up to it." If we can do so, perhaps there will be "the dawn of a new maturity – a coming of age."

Our "bravery," however, can go only so far. Our "new maturity" cannot tolerate a challenge to our fundamental decency.

Since TRB recalls "the maniac Hitler crew," perhaps we may go on to recall the self-judgment of the Nazi criminals whom he so passionately detests. We might recall the words of Heinrich Himmler, speaking of the massacre of the Jews:

> *To have gone through this and – except for instances of human weakness – to have remained decent, that has made us tough. This is an unwritten, never to be written, glorious page of our history.*[7]

By Himmler's standards, the toughness of the American government must be exalted indeed. We have gone through this, and yet remained decent. Blundering perhaps, but fundamentally decent. And if anyone doubts our toughness, let them ask the Cambodians.

We did, of course, have our instances of human weakness. By our

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standards, My Lai was such an instance; the criminals were dealt with properly in a demonstration of our system of justice. It is true that we did not apply exactly the same standards that were brought to bear in the case of General Yamashita, hanged for crimes committed by troops over which he had no control in the last months of the Philippine campaign. But at least Lieutenant Calley spent some time under house arrest. The long arm of justice, however, does not reach as far as those responsible, say, for Operation SPEEDY EXPRESS in the delta province of Kien Hoa in early 1969, which succeeded in massacring 11,000 of those South Vietnamese whose right to self-determination we were so vigorously defending, capturing 750 weapons and destroying the political and social structure established by the NLF. This operation was more than merely decent: "the performance of this division has been magnificent," General Abrams rhapsodized, in promoting its commander.[8] We can be sure that the custodians of history will place these glorious pages in our history in the proper light.

Had the Second World War ended in a stalemate, similar debates might have taken place in Nazi Germany. The intellectual doves would have argued that the invasion of Russia was a tragic over-extension – dreams of success were always a myth. The hawks would counter that with better tactics German rule could have been successfully imposed.

Had Germany been immune from retaliation, Nazi intellectuals would have indignantly condemned the Anglo-American invasion of peaceful France as these aggressors sought to overthrow the legitimate Vichy government, stoutly defended by many loyal Frenchmen. And they would have contemplated with horror the terror visited by the resistance after the conquest by the foreign invaders (those bloodbaths were real, not fabricated by the propaganda services). But one should be cautious with analogies, recalling that Vietnam has been "conquered" by Vietnamese.

If a popular peace movement had arisen in Germany, the more sensitive souls might have explained that they were compelled to remain aloof because of their "appetite for nuance," their appreciation for "the value of complication and a bit of irony," their understanding of the tragic complexity of history. The defeat of Germany spared us this repulsive display.

Our own respectable doves share some fundamental assumptions with the hawks. The U.S. government is honorable. It may make mistakes, but it does not commit crimes. It is continually deceived and often foolish (we are so "naive and idealistic" in our dealings with our allies and dependencies, Chester Cooper remarks), but it is never wicked. Crucially, it does not act on the basis of the perceived self-interest of dominant social groups, as other states do. "One of the difficulties of explaining [American] policy," Ambassador Charles Bohlen explained at Columbia University in 1969, "... is that our policy is not rooted in any national material interest of the United States, as most foreign policies of other countries in the past have been." Only those who are "radical" or "irresponsible" or emotional" – and thus quite beyond the pale – will insist on applying to the U.S. the intellectual and moral standards that are taken for granted when we analyze and evaluate the behavior of officially designated enemies.

[OPPOSITION AND SUPPORT]

It is a highly important fact that the majority of the American people strayed beyond the bounds of legitimate criticism, regarding the war as immoral, not merely a tactical error. The intellectuals, however, generally remained more submissive to official ideology, consistent with their social role. This is evident from commentary in the press and academic scholarship. The polls revealed a negative correlation between educational level and opposition to the war: specifically, principled opposition, that is, advocacy of withdrawal of American forces. The correlation has been obscured by the fact that visible and articulate opposition to the war, not surprisingly, disproportionately involved more privileged social strata. The greater subservience of the intelligentsia to state ideology is also demonstrated in a recent study of the "American intellectual elite"[9] – if one is willing to tolerate this absurd concept for the sake of discussion. The study reveals, as should have been anticipated, that these more subtle thinkers rarely opposed the war on "ideological" or "moral" grounds, but rather, if at all, on "pragmatic" grounds. Translating to more honest terms, the intellectual elite generally felt that we couldn't get away with it (at least after the Tet offensive), or that the cost was too high.

The essential features of U.S. policy were clearly illustrated in what, let us hope, was the final incident of the American war in Indochina, the Mayaguez incident.

Despite official denials, one point of the Mayaguez adventure last May clearly was to punish Cambodia for its insolence in withstanding a devastating American attack for many years. The world must understand that the U.S. accepts no responsibility and will tolerate no reproach for its criminal war against Cambodia or for the destruction caused by American military forces. We have emerged, our self-righteousness fully intact, complimenting ourselves on our courage as we leave the scene in a last burst of glory.

Whether deliberately or not, the U.S. government did not notify the shipping company that Cambodia was defending its territorial waters, and had resisted intrusion in several recent instances. The Mayaguez entered these waters and was detained by Cambodian gunboats. According to the "supreme law of the land," the U.S. executive is required to undertake negotiations and other peaceful measures, if it perceives a threat to international peace and security. The threat or use of force is permitted only in the case of self-defense against armed attack, surely not the case in this incident.

On the contrary, Henry Kissinger explained that we must "draw a line against ... situations where the United States might be forced into a humiliating discussion ..." In place of the "humiliating discussion" required by law and minimal decency, military force was employed, including bombardment of the mainland well after the Cambodian government announced that the ship and its crew would be sent on their way with a warning, indeed, after the ship had

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been retaken and its crew returned. To the press, "some U.S. sources privately conceded . . . that they were gratified to see the Khmer Rouge government hit hard."[10]

Twenty-one Americans are dead or missing, along with an unknown number of Cambodians. By a miracle, none of the crew of the Mayaguez were among the numerous casualties. Thailand, the only SEATO power in the region, was not consulted before the American resort to force and Thai sovereignty was grossly infringed by the dispatch of U.S. marines to Thai bases without notification or consent. The result may be an acceleration of the forced departure of the U.S. military from mainland Southeast Asia, another welcome defeat for Kissingerism. In short, lawlessness, savagery and stupidity.

But not complete stupidity. Jingoist sentiments were aroused at home and some political capital may be made of this. As Senator Edward Kennedy said, "the President's firm and successful action gave an undeniable and needed lift to the nation's spirit, and he deserves our genuine support."[11] Whether everyone's spirits were lifted by still another blow at Cambodia, after what we have done to that ravaged country, is perhaps an open question. But no matter. American liberalism can generally be counted on to give "genuine support" to the use of force, if it is successful. Furthermore, the world was put on notice – as if notice were needed – that the world's most violent power has not renounced its commitment to the use of force as a consequence of its defeat in Indochina, at least when the victims are defenseless. The essential point was stated clearly by Anthony Lewis, a lone voice of courage and honor on this incident: "For all the bluster and righteous talk of principle, it is impossible to imagine the United States behaving that way toward anyone other than a weak, ruined country of little yellow people who have frustrated us."

Again, the crucial matter is lawlessness, in the specific sense of violating the principle that force may not be used for any purpose except for self-defense against armed attack. The significance of this crucial matter is obvious if only from the fact that it is so generally excluded from discussion of the "lessons of Vietnam" in the mass media, the journals of opinion, and – we may safely predict – academic scholarship.

Within the ideological institutions – the mass media, the schools and the universities – there is every reason to expect that the task of excluding these issues will be carried out with a fair measure of success. Whether these efforts will succeed in restoring the conformism and submissiveness of earlier years remains to be seen.

The *Post* editorial was certainly correct in denying that "we as a people are intrinsically bad." In fact, "we as a people" recognized that the war was something more than a mistake. In 1965, teach-ins, demonstrations, town forums, extensive lobbying, and other forms of protest reached substantial proportions, and by 1967, there were enormous mass demonstrations, large-scale draft resistance, and other forms of non-violent civil disobedience. Not long after, the American political leadership came to understand why imperial powers have generally relied on mercenaries to fight brutal colonial wars, as the conscript army, much to its credit, began to disintegrate in the field. By 1971, to judge by the polls, two-thirds of the population regarded the war as immoral and called for the withdrawal of American troops. Thus "we as a people" were, by then, neither doves nor hawks in the sense of responsible editorial opinion and the overwhelming majority of the political commentators.

[REWRITING DEFEAT]

It has become a matter of critical importance to reverse the ideological defeats of the past decade and to reestablish the doctrine that the U.S. is entitled to use force and violence to impose order as it sees fit. Some propagandists are willing to put the matter quite crudely. Thus Kissinger, in his academic days, wrote of the great risks if there is "no penalty for intransigence." But there are more subtle and effective means. The best, no doubt, is to reconstruct somehow the shattered image of the U.S. as a public benefactor. Hence the emphasis on our naiveté, our blunders, our early impulses to do good, our moralism and lack of concern for the material interests that dominate the policy of other powers.

Where this doctrine is not blandly asserted in foreign policy debate, it is insinuated. Consider, as a crucial case in point, the current debate over the use of military force to ensure American control over the world's major energy resources in the Middle East, and thus to maintain our capacity to control and organize the "free world." For the moment, the debate over the intervention is the pastime of intellectuals.

But the situation is unstable. No one can predict what the future may bring. Within the narrow spectrum of responsible opinion there is room for disagreement over the tactical question of how American hegemony is to be established, in the Middle East or elsewhere. Some feel that force is necessary to guarantee "American interests." Others conclude that economic power and normal business procedures will suffice. No serious question may be raised, however, concerning our

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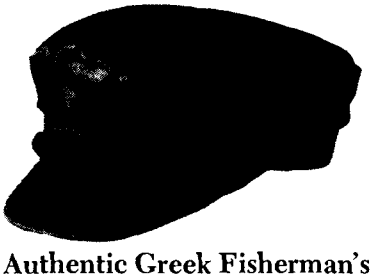

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right to intervene, or the benevolent purposes that will guide such moves, if we are forced to counteract "the aggression of the oil-producing countries against the economies of the developing and developed worlds."[12]

It comes as no surprise, then, to discover that in the current debate over U.S. intervention in the Arabian peninsula it is generally accepted on all sides that after having successfully established its rule, the U.S. will guarantee a fair and equitable distribution of Middle East oil. The proposition that the U.S. will or might act in this way is rarely questioned. But consider now the basis for this tacit assumption. Is it an induction from the historical record? That is, can we found this belief on American conduct in the past with regard to its agricultural resources or raw materials or the products of its industrial plant? When the U.S. dominated world trade in oil, did it use its power to guarantee that its European allies, for example, would benefit from the low production cost of Middle Eastern petroleum? These questions are ludicrous.

Of course, it might be argued that the leopard will, for some reason, change its spots. But then, we might speculate that the Arab oil producers are no less likely to use their control over petroleum to ensure a fair and equitable distribution. If anything, this hope is better supported by the historical record. The Arab oil producers expend a far greater proportion of per capita income for foreign aid than the U.S. or other industrial powers have ever done, and a far larger proportion of their aid goes to poorer countries.[13] Thus if history is a guide, perhaps we should encourage Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to conquer Texas, rather than debating the merits of an American invasion of the Middle East. In fact, the whole discussion suggests a dangerous case of advanced cretinism. What is remarkable about the recent debate is that it proceeds at all, given the absurdity of the hidden premise.

Nothing could indicate more clearly how wedded the intelligentsia remain to the doctrine of American benevolence, and the corollary principle that the U.S. is entitled to resort to force and violence to maintain "global order" – if only we can succeed, and, as the more sensitive will add, if only we are not too brutal about it.

The American record in Indochina can be captured in three words: lawlessness, savagery, and stupidity – in that order. From the outset, it was understood, and explicitly affirmed, at the highest level of policy-making, that the U.S. "intervention" in South Vietnam and elsewhere was to be pursued in defiance of any legal barrier to the use of force in international affairs. Given the indigenous strength and courage of the South Vietnamese resistance, the U.S. was compelled to undertake a war of annihilation to destroy the society in which it gained its support – the society "controlled by the Viet Cong," in the terminology of the propagandists. The U.S. partially succeeded in this aim, but was never able to construct a viable client regime out of the wreckage. When Washington was no longer able to call out the B-52s, the whole rotten structure collapsed from within. In the end, the interests of American ruling groups were severely damaged, in Southeast Asia, in the U.S. itself, and throughout the world. Lawlessness led to savagery in the face of resistance to aggression. And in retrospect, the failure of the project may be attributed, in part, to stupidity.

Intellectual apologists for state violence, including those who describe themselves as doves, will naturally focus on the stupidity, alleging that the war was a tragic error, a case of worthy impulse transmuted into bad policy, perhaps because of the personal failings of a generation of political leaders and incompetent advisers. Stupidity is a politically neutral category. If American policy was stupid, as in retrospect all can see it was, then the remedy is to find smarter policy makers; presumably, the critics.

Some opponents of the war were appalled by the savagery of the American attack. Even such a prominent hawk as Bernard Fall turned against the war in the belief that Vietnam was unlikely to survive as a cultural and historic entity under the American model of counterrevolutionary violence. It is true that the Nazi-like barbarity of U.S. war policy was the most salient and unforgettable feature of the war, in South Vietnam and elsewhere in Indochina. But savagery too is a politically neutral category. If the American leadership was sadistic, as it surely was, the remedy – it will be argued – is to find people who will pursue the same policies in a more humane fashion.

The more critical matter is the lawlessness, specifically the resort to force to maintain a "stable world order" in the interests of those who claim the right to manage the global economic system.

Suppose that the system of thought control re-establishes the doctrine that the U.S. remains exempt from the principles we invoke in hypocritically condemning the resort to force and terror on the part of others. Then the basis is laid for the next stage of imperial violence and aggression. As long as these doctrines hold sway, there is every reason to expect a re-enactment of the tragedy of Vietnam.

Noam Chomsky's most recent book is Peace in the Middle East? *(Vintage)*

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footnotes

[1] **Telford Taylor,** *Nuremberg and Vietnam: An American Tragedy*, **Chicago, 1970. For discussion of his analysis, see my** *For Reasons of State*, **New York, 1973, chapter 3.**

[2] **See** *American Power and the New Mandarins*, **New York, 1969, chapter 2;** *At War with Asia*, **New York, 1970, chapter 1;** *For Reasons of State*, **chapter 1, section V.**

[3] **William Y. Elliott, ed.,** *The Political Economy of American Foreign Policy*, **New York, 1955.**

[4] **General Maxwell D. Taylor,** *Swords and Plowshares*, **New York, 1972.**

[5] **On the Paris Agreements, their background, and the American response, see my articles in** *Ramparts*, **April, 1973, and (with E.S. Herman), Dec., 1974; and for the disgraceful role of the American press in concealing the facts and their meaning, see my article in** *Social Policy*, **September/October, 1973. For extensive discussion of the background and aftermath of the Paris Agreements, see a forthcoming study by Gareth Porter.,** *A Peace Denied: The U.S., Vietnam and The Paris Agreements,* **to be published Sept. 1975 by Indiana University Press.**

[6] **Bernard B. Fall,** *New Society*, **London, April 22 1965; reprinted in M.G. Raskin and B.B. Falls, eds.,** *The Viet-Nam Reader*, **New York 1965.**

[7] **Cited from the Nuremberg Documents by Karl Dietrich Bracher,** *The German Dictatorship*, **New York, 1970, page 423.**

[8] **See Keven Buckley,** *Newsweek*, **June 19, 1972, and for a brief review, N. Chomsky and E.S. Herman,** *Counter-Revolutionary Violence*, **Andover, 1973.**

[9] **Charles Kadushin,** *The American Intellectual Elite*, **Boston, 1974. On the polls, see Andre Modigliani,** *American Political Science Review*, **September., 1972.**

[10] **Michael Getler,** *Washington Post-Boston Globe*, **May 17, 1975.**

[11] **Evelyn Keene,** *Boston Globe*, **May 18; commencement address at Bentley College.**

[12] **Editorial,** *New Republic*, **Feb. 1, 1975. The editors warn against the kind of "arbi-**

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trarily consistent policy" that would have us eschew "all use (or threats) of force" (as required by law). They reassure the Pentagon that it is "wrong to assume that those who opposed the Vietnam horror are blindly bound to permanent opposition to military action" — rather "they will be receptive to arguments about national interest and for that matter about ethical obligations to democratic allies threatened by terror and aggression" (read: "Israel"). They stress, of course, the benevolent purposes of our military intervention in the Middle East, if we are driven to such steps. The reader may check to see when U.S. actions in Indochina were described as "aggression" by these editors, or when they have soberly discussed invading Canada, which has also committed "aggression" by supporting the rise of oil prices and the production cuts.

[13] Cf. Jonathan Power, *N.Y. Times*, March 15, 1975; several articles in *Middle East International*, April, 1975; the analysis by the Pakistani director of policy planning and program review at the World Bank, reported by David Francis, *Christian Science Monitor*, May 5, 1975; and many other recent discussions.

REVOLUTION

(From page 34)

the Workers' Party in the North – will now show its colors in the South. This is the party whose combined northern and southern branches had been leading the struggle since 1954, presumably with experts on South Vietnamese questions at the outset of the fighting – men like Le Duan and Politburo member Le Duc Tho, Kissinger's tough interlocutor. Echoing Le Duan, all the documents proclaim that "the revolutionary fight in the South is both a struggle to complete national independence and a very bitter class struggle."

The first goal has been attained, but not the second. In view of the extremely complex social situation on the spot, and in accordance with guidelines the National Liberation Front laid down a long time ago, it is not impossible that the South may see the emergence – as did the North – of a Patriotic Front far more broadly-based than the Communist Party and grouping together, on the basis of a plan defined by the Communists, other political groups, trade unions, various "mass organizations," representatives of the resident Chinese community and so on. A development of this sort had already been foreshadowed in the speech that Hoang Quoc Viet gave in 1972 at the third congress of the Patriotic Front.

The North itself is economically very backward and still hesitant. There is, for example, talk of stripping some of the fat – the incompetent cadres – off the Communist Party. Questions are still being asked about the "transition to large-scale Socialist production," though the controversy is not about basic principles but about the methods to be used. And people frequently refuse to accept the conditions imposed by a more up-to-date, more scientific economy.

On top of all this, there is the question of replacing the old leaders – a problem which the fourth congress should in theory settle. And only time will settle the question of whether the "Socialist North, the great rear base of the revolution for the whole country" is going to become the model to copy.

Jacques Decornoy is chief editor on Asia material for Le Monde, *and is the author of* Southeast Asia *(Casterman) and* Yellow Peril *and* White Fear *(Grasset).*

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DICK GREGORY

(From page 28)

it has manipulated white folks' fears for 150 years . . ."

It was clear enough that Dick was touching all the central nerves and working them expertly. Soon the hall was full of shouts of "Teach!" and "Right on!" and "Tell it!" Dick said that the number one problem in the world was food, the number two problem water. He said that unless the government began radical programs to assure the fair distribution of food to everyone, 80 percent of those now alive in America would be dead in four years, the casualties of food shortages and rioting. He called abortion "a death sentence upon us," described the pill as genocidal, said it was cancer-inducing, a fatal poison to teenage girls. He said that the government was deliberately alienating letter carriers, that the military was learning how to take over the Post Office, that the Interstate highways were built to provide landing strips for military airplanes. Fluorine and chlorine were being added to the water supply, he said, to program "the super subconscious" to be hostile and aggressive.

". . . when the truth comes out you'll find that Kennedy gave the order to kill Diem, you'll find that Kennedy gave the order to kill Marilyn Monroe, and when the truth comes out, you'll find that ol' Jack was screwin' Marilyn Monroe, and Marilyn Monroe, with that ol' blabbermouth of hers and her insecurity, she was so happy the President was rippin' her off that she started tellin' people. You'll find out that the curly-headed punk in the White House was a tramp like all the rest . . ."

The three-hour speech was interrupted by cheers and applause at least 50 times. As free and energetic as Fidel, as righteous as Barry Goldwater, as funny as the old Dick Gregory, he worked the crowd into such a mood of compliance and trust that everyone seemed grateful for even his most dire predictions, his most wrathful warnings. "You play your little games, and you play 'em fast, 'cause recess is just about over!"'

Afterwards, 50 or 60 students, most of them black, came down front for a further word with Dick, who sat on the apron and counseled them. He cautioned them against smoking, drinking, taking drugs, eating meat, fish or fowl. He told them that any sexual activity without procreation as its goal was degenerate and harmful. He said that maintaining an erection for more than 45 seconds led to cancer of the prostate. That an ejaculation proceeding from more than 45 seconds of intercourse shot the cancer into the womb. It was a collection of beliefs that would have driven most speakers off any campus in the country, but Dick put it across in a way that had everyone looking slack-jawed and sheepish, nodding unhappy assent. When someone asked shyly if a little wine might be okay with dinner, Dick said, sure, do your thing – but that to a pure spirit, a roomful of people whose spirits had been poisoned with alcohol or tobacco was too negative to bear. "It

Ramparts

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would be like you walking into this auditorium and finding a turd in every chair."

["... HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?"]

It was well past three before we got home, and although Dick had dozed gently on the way, he was the model of the affable house guest, holding my baby daughter and cooing in her ear, praising the drab-best corners of the house, raving about the comforts of his room. He asked me to wake him no later than seven so that we'd have time for another talk before he caught his plane. As I crawled into bed, my wife suggested that we experiment with fasting.

The next morning when I went out to get the newspaper, I was not at all surprised to discover that an avocado had fallen from the almost barren tree in the parking strip and landed directly on the folded paper. Inside the paper was a story about how the CIA had blown up a French ship in Havana harbor in the early '60s. It was the kind of omen I was sure Dick would be glad to hear about. I smoked a couple of cigarettes, drank a cup of coffee, brushed my teeth to banish the turd-in-the-lecture-chair aura I'd acquired, and woke Dick up with a soft tap at his door.

He snapped awake, sprang out of bed, and asked permission to take a shower. Five minutes later he was dressed and ready to go. "Boy, I sure feel good!" he said. I had to stifle an urge to offer him some kind of eye-opener, a glass of water, anything, but I knew he was still on an air day and wouldn't sip water till six. I told him about the avocado-CIA augury "That's really somethin'," Dick said, "because today is Saturday, and when I'm eatin', I sometimes take an avocado on Saturdays, so maybe this is a way of tellin' me that the CIA is getting exposed and my fast doesn't have that long to go."

On the way to the airport, Dick explained that the great spiritual change in his life had come about because of the assassination in Dallas. He'd been on a nightclub tour in Texas at the time, and two days before it happened, a friend told him that the President would die in Dallas. On November 22, just to tease his sidekicks, he told everybody to forget about catching the plane they were going to meet that afternoon – there wouldn't be a show that night. Then he stepped into a cab, and the driver was crying, and he said, "Oh, man, haven't you heard? The President's dead, man." From that point on, Dick said, he has given a credulous ear to "occult folks, spiritualists, numerologists, everybody," and now he had connections throughout the world of seers and researchers and investigators that impelled and encouraged him.

"... I pride myself that there's nothing that can happen on this planet without my knowing about it inside 48 hours. Just one phone call. I can do that because of the way my mind works. Take Comet Kahoutek.

"When I heard about it, I remembered what my grandpa used to tell us. We called him Mr. Young. He used to say, 'Gentlemens,' he'd always call us 'Gentlemens,' us little kids, he'd say, 'Gentlemens, watch for a star to appear in the east, with three wise men, and after that, gentlemens, the world won't be the same no more.' I always thought he was just reinventing the story of Jesus, personificated. But then when I heard about Kahoutek, I got interested. Not just because of what Mr. Young used to say, but I got interested. The first article in the paper said that the cat who discovered it was an amateur astronomer, and then it turns out that Kahoutek is one of the leading astronomers in the world. So I had the feeling that something was up. I have friends. I had a chance to look at it through an eleven-million-dollar telescope. Then what happened? They sent three astronauts up in a space capsule, and I believe they sent 'em up there to hit Kahoutek with a laser beam. And that was it for Kahoutek. Everybody was real disappointed. And about two weeks later here comes a story in the paper that says, 'Scientists know for sure now that comets are made of' dirty ice.' I saw that and it all came together. The astronauts were the three wise men, only they shot the star down. And now they have the nerve to tell us that they know comets are made of ice. I saw that and I said, 'You sho do, you sho do!' And you know, since Kahoutek, only India, China and Russia have remained stable among the major countries. Every other one has had a shakeup. Even Germany. Imagine, Willy Brandt out! You can't get no safer than Willy Brandt."

["... FIGHTIN' FOR SURVIVAL"]

Dick's energy was flowing real good by the time we got to the airport. He talked of his plan to open a pilot food program for the needy, setting it up in a couple of major cities as a model for the government. He would give out free navy beans laced with his own food. "Say: 'Here's your bowl of beans, brother, and here's a little package. Stir it up, and you're okay.' Then take the juice of the navy beans and save it for the small babies that are nursing. The thing about food shortages in this country is that they're going to be a whole lot worse than anywhere else in the world. Because in India and Africa they don't have no television in their huts shakin' food commercials at 'em every 15 minutes. That's a heck of a thing. The last depression, wasn't nobody eatin' dog food. People eatin' dog food now. The reason is those commercials. A lot of people are comparing what's happen' now with the '30s. There's one thing they forget. In the '30s I could get a loaf of bread for two cents. I could get a pound of rice for three cents. And if I could get to my rice and my bread, I'm home free. Now they're sayin' it costs a farmer 37 cents to produce a pound of rice. If that's true, the government should subsidize the eater to the extent of paying the farmer 27 cents. So the eater gets his pound of rice for a dime. Because as long as there's a guarantee that I can get to my dinner, you cut down on a lot of violence."

Dick said he had a good relationship with the other conspiracy researchers. He considered himself less a researcher than a spokesman. Rather than having a unique set of facts, he had an illuminating way of looking at the facts. "We're in this

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thing together. People like Ralph Schoenman, Bob Broman, Mae Brussel, Paul Krassner, Mark Lane. But my head isn't into this 24 hours a day. Like I appreciated holdin' that little baby last night. I was there! When I walked up on the grass outside your place, I could really feel it and enjoy it, and oh, wow, that's where I was, right there!

"See, I got so many diversified things happenin' all at once that when the market falls in on one of them, blam, I'm covered. I'm here, I'm there, I'm meeting people, blah, blah, blah, blah, writin' books, givin' lectures, wow – I'm makin' enough money that I can jump on a plane and go anywhere I want. Plus, Dick Gregory get his name in the paper whenever he get ready. See, the researchers was always treated like niggers. They got the same scars nigger's got. 'So glad that somebody looked at my stuff! So glad y'all had a minute!' Well, now we're vindicated. One day Mae Brussel and Mark Lane and the others will be the heroes. They're the ones that kept it open. Those hard-leg folks. I love them researchers, man, but they've been discredited for so long that there's a lot of snipin' goin' on now.

"I learned a lesson, something I'm sure I wouldn't have known if I wasn't Dick Gregory. And that is that bein' big means a lot more than bein' dedicated. Bigness overshadows dedication. I mean the researchers, those folks is dedicated, but a lot of them is so petty. And the CIA and all them wrong, corrupt cats is not as dedicated, but they're so big.

"There's one more thing I got to do before I start my run to L. A. this summer, and that's mail out to every senator, every congressperson, every mayor, of the top hundred cities, every important newspaper, network, what have you, send 'em all my stuff. I've spent thirty grand so far this year, out of my earnings, you know, just to keep this work goin'. I had a $600,000 life insurance policy ever since I hit it big, but it became a matter of paying to keep the investigation going or paying the premiums, and I chose to keep the work going with no hesitation at all. I've never suffered economically the way I'm sufferin' now. I'm just fightin' for survival, man, the most outrageous thing you ever saw in your life, and me with ten children. But it's that ability to raise money, to earn it, to get on a plane, to put other people on planes, to take the message, to keep it alive – that's what I'm here for, and that's what I'm going to do."

We were late for the plane and had to run from one terminal to another with five or six of Dick's bags. Dick grabbed the three biggest ones and ran down the ramp, a 43-year-old man on the 30th day of his fast. He seemed abrim with strength and vitality, which was just as well, since he had to give a speech in Gary, Indiana, that afternoon and would then catch a helicopter for South Bend, where he was giving an evening lecture at Notre Dame. A skycap saw him coming, flashed a big grin, and held up his arms in brotherly greeting. He didn't look the least bit ranked when Dick clapped him on the shoulder and slipped him a five-dollar tip.

Barry Farrell is a contributing editor to Harpers' *based in Los Angeles. He is currently writing a book about prostitution in Nevada entitled* Real Short Love Stories *to be published by Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.*

OVERPOPULATION

(From page 25)

of developed countries.

Food plays a critical role in these relationships. Hunger is widespread in the world and those who believe that the world's resources are already insufficient to support the world population cite this fact as the most powerful evidence that the world is overpopulated. Conversely, those who are concerned with relieving hunger and preventing future famines often assert that the basic solution to that problem is to control the growth of the world population.

Once more it is revealing to examine actual data regarding the incidence of malnutrition. From a detailed study of nutritional levels among various populations in India by Revelle & Frisch (Vol. III, "The World Food Problem", A Report of the President's Science Advisory Committee, Washington, 1967) we learn, for example, that in Madras State more than one-half the population consumes significantly less than the physiologically required number of calories and of protein in their diet. However, the *average* values for all residents of the state represents 99 percent of the calorie requirement and 98 percent of the protein requirement. What this means, of course, is that a significant part of the population receives *more* than the required dietary intake. About one-third of the population receives 106 percent of the required calories and 104 percent of the required protein; about 8 percent of the population receives 122 percent or more of the calorie requirement and 117 percent or more of the protein requirement. These dietary differences are determined by income. The more than one-half of the population that is significantly below the physiologically required diet earn less than $21 per capita per year, as compared with the state-wide average of $33.40.

What these data indicate is that hunger in Madras State, defined simply in terms of a significantly inadequate intake of calories and protein, is not the result of a biological factor–the inadequate production of food. Rather, in the strict sense, it results from the *social* factors that govern the *distribution* of available food among the population.

In the last year, newspaper stories of actual famines in various parts of the world have also supported the view that starvation is usually not caused by the insufficient production of food in the world, but by social factors that prevent the required distribution of food. Thus, in Ethiopia many people suffered from starvation because government officials failed to mobilize readily available supplies of foreign grain. In India, according to a recent *New York Times* report, inadequate food supplies were due in part from a government policy which

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"resulted in a booming black market, angry resentment among farmers and traders, and a breakdown in supplies." The report asserts further that "The central problem of India—rooted poverty—remains unchecked and seems to be getting worse. For the third year out of four per capita income is expected to drop. Nearly 80 percent of the children are malnourished ... The economic torpor seems symptomatic of deeper problems. Cynicism is rampant: the Government's socialist slogans and calls for austerity are mocked in view of bribes and corruption, luxury construction and virtually open illegal contributions by businessmen to the Congress party." (*New York Times*, Apr. 17, 1974)

Given these observations and the overall fact that the amount of food crop produced in the world at present is sufficient to provide an adequate diet to about eight billion people—more than twice the world population—it appears to me that the present, tragically widespread hunger in the world cannot be regarded as evidence that the size of the world population has outrun the world's capacity to produce food. I have already pointed out that we can regard the rapid growth of population in developing countries and the grinding poverty which engenders it as the distant outcome of colonial exploitation—a policy imposed on the antecedents of the developing countries by the more advanced ones. This policy has forcefully determined both the distribution of the world's wealth and of its different populations, accumulating most of the wealth in the western countries and most of the people in the remaining, largely tropical, ones.

Thus there is a grave imbalance between the world's wealth and the world's people. But the imbalance is not the supposed disparity between the world's *total* wealth and *total* population. Rather, it is due to the gross *distributive* imbalance among the nations of the world. What the problem calls for, I believe, is a process that now figures strongly in the thinking of the peoples of the Third World: a return of some of the world's wealth to the countries whose resources and peoples have borne so much of the burden of producing it—the developing nations.

[WEALTH AMONG NATIONS]

There is no denying that this proposal would involve exceedingly difficult economic, social and political problems, especially for the rich countries. But the alternative solutions thus far advanced are at least as difficult and socially stressful.

A major source of confusion is that these diverse proposed solutions to the population problem, which differ so sharply in their moral postulates and their political effects, appear to have a common base in scientific fact. It is, after all, equally true, scientifically, that the birthrate can be reduced by promulgating contraceptive practices (providing they are used), by elevating living standards, or by withholding food from starving nations.

But what I find particularly disturbing is that behind this screen of confusion between scientific fact and political intent there has developed an escalating series of what can be only regarded, in my opinion, as inhumane, abhorrent political schemes put forward in the guise of science. First we had Paddock's "triage" proposal, which would condemn whole nations to death through some species of global "benign neglect". Then we have schemes for coercing people to curtail their fertility, by physical and legal means which are ominously left unspecified. Now we are told (for example, in the statement of "The Environmental Fund") that we must curtail rather than extend our efforts to feed the hungry peoples of the world. Where will it end? Is it conceivable that the proponents of coercive population control will be guided by one of Garrett Hardin's earlier, astonishing proposals:

> *How can we help a foreign country to escape over-population? Clearly the worst thing we can do is send food ... Atomic bombs would be kinder. For a few moments the misery would be acute, but it would soon come to an end for most of the people, leaving a very few survivors to suffer thereafter ("The Immorality of Being Softhearted", Stanford Alumni Almanac, Jan., 1969).*

There has been a long-standing alliance between psuedo-science and political repression; the Nazis' genetic theories, it will be recalled, were to be tested in the ovens at Dachau. This evil alliance feeds on confusion.

The present confusion can be removed by recognizing *all* of the current population proposals for what they are—not scientific observations but value judgments that reflect sharply differing ethical views and political intentions. The family planning approach, if applied as the exclusive solution to the problem, would put the burden of remedying a fault created by a social and political evil—colonialism—voluntarily on the individual victims of the evil. The so-called "lifeboat ethic" would compound the original evil of colonialism by forcing its victims to forego the humane course toward a balanced population, improvement of living standards, or if they refuse, to abandon them to destruction, or even to thrust them toward it.

My own purely personal conclusion is, like all of these, not scientific but political: that the world population crisis, which is the ultimate outcome of the exploitation of poor nations by rich ones, ought to be remedied by returning to the poor countries enough of the wealth taken from them to give their peoples both the reason and the resources voluntarily to limit their own fertility.

In sum, I believe that if the root cause of the world population crisis is poverty, then to end it we must abolish poverty. And if the cause of poverty is the grossly unequal distribution of world's wealth, then to end poverty, and with it the population crisis, we must redistribute that wealth, among nations and within them.

Barry Commoner is Director of the Center For the Biology of Natural Systems at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, and Chairman of the Board of Directors, Scientists' Institute for Public Information. *Adapted from a speech to the International Convocation on the World Population Crisis.* *Copyright© 1974 by Barry Commoner.*

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(From page 8)

and there is no such thing as debunking the mainstream and dropping out at will. This is a crisis spanning many levels, in some ways, all the levels of our lives. People feel dazed and overwhelmed, whether they are pounding the pavement with picket signs or resumes or both.

Ramparts has by no means conquered the bewilderment that comes of dealing with such divergent scales of social space and time. But we are attempting to view society from many angles, to touch people's lives in many different ways. We are trying to make connections and find solutions which can bridge such diversity, appreciating the pain and hardship a Depression brings.

What is required is more than detached analysis; this wound to our society will cut broad and deep. Merely to say that only social revolution can really cure the nation's ills is not enough. Nor is it enough to retreat to personal survival and to hell with the rest. It is not enough to promulgate strategies and structures for change without looking to the goals that must inspire and direct them. Nor is it enough to set out visions of utopia disconnected from the means of their achievement.

No one institution, no magazine, is equal to the awesome multiplicity of tasks. But this is the universe of challenges in which we see ourselves at work. We hope to be a nexus which brings together diverse energies and insights, where disconnected and often isolated movements, analyses, and appreciations of the human spirit can converge. We want to help gather the threads of a concerted will and wisdom binding us to a powerful, committed strugggle for a future in which decent human beings can be proud to live.

[AN OFFER WE ARE PROUD TO MAKE]

Out of this period of dearth and privation, history will take either a desperate or creative turn. It is a time for necessities and not for luxuries, and in this crisis we believe that a strong radical press is an ultimate necessity. We feel that *Ramparts* is uniquely positioned to rise to the challenges ahead, but it will require your support to carry through. That is not an easy thing for us to ask. However much the dignity of poverty can be presumed, such an appeal is always on the knife edge between embarrassment and pride. It is only from a sincere sense that the effort is worthy that we are making this appeal.

To underscore that sense, before asking anything of you we made a special request of four people whose stature and accomplishments in our cultural and social life command a deep respect. Daniel Ellsberg, Joseph Heller, Denise Levertov, and Kurt Vonnegut have agreed to inscribe copies of their books as part of a special subscription offer described below. We take this as a symbol of the many ways we feel that this is not only an appeal for your support, but also an offer we are proud to make.

The price of a subscription accompanied by one of the four inscribed books is set at $25, an amount we felt to be the upper limit of what could be considered a "democratically" accessible offer. For those who feel that one of these books would be of enduring satisfaction, we urge you to extend yourself if it is within your means. And if the $150 lifetime subscription which brings with it all four inscribed books is financially plausible and personally tempting, we hope you will take that leap as well. But whether it's $150 or $8 (one year without book), even if your subscription is not about to expire, we hope you will renew now.

What this "leap" will mean for each one of you is different; we can only tell you that the magazine will need "a strong response." For those who feel you are old-timers at "early-renewing," we ask you to bear with us one year further on. For those who are new to *Ramparts,* we ask you to take the plunge of an advance commitment. What a strong response means to *Ramparts* is many things at once: it is financial sustenance, it is a vote of confidence, it is a source of pride. That is what we meant in "A Few Words" in our March issue when, after explaining the absence of a February *Ramparts,* we went on to say, "The worst seems to be over. To us that means survival is no longer a question, though as usual it will be a struggle." Or, in other words, we summed it up: "If you can keep it up, so can we." And that is an offer we are very proud to make.

For the staff,

Patricia McGrell

David Kolodney

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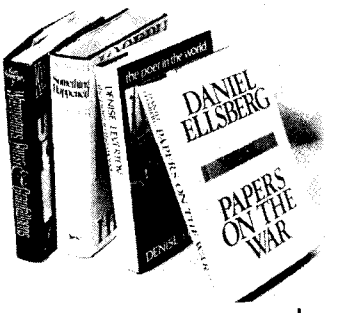

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LETTERS

(From page 9)

concerned, the revolutionary movement rarely existed, and when its statements were reported, they were treated with pejorative terminology (terms like "Viet-cong" and "Reds") and subjected to distortion.

Globe Asia correspondent Matthew Storin's Vietnam reporting was considered by Boston-area anti-war activists and organizations to embody the worst features of biased reportage. Few were surprised when he openly editorialized on behalf of more aid for Thieu, expressing his belief that South Vietnam had a viable future because of "the encouraging prospect of commercially significant oil drilling in the South China sea." His pieces thinly disguised a deep seated anti-communist prejudice, as when he told of meeting a North Vietnamese officer who confessed that after twenty years in the Army he wanted to be back home with his family. "My first reaction," Storin wrote, "was to consider this as part of a propaganda scheme, but afterwards I wondered why a communist soldier couldn't genuinely have such a humanitarian feeling."

These attitudes led him to attack me – and the peace movement – "for contributing to the Hanoi government's propaganda machine." the *Globe* permitted me to respond to the red-baiting column but did not print a longer refutation by Nobel laureate George Wald. MIT Professor Noam Chomsky also did a detailed critique of Storin's charges about the alleged 'communist atrocity' at Cai Lay. The *Globe* never pursued the matter.

When I visited the American Embassy in Saigon, I was encouraged by the Ambassador's press counsellor to attack other journalists whose critical perspectives were considered "negative" and "non-objective." It seems likely that Storin received the same treatment. By the time he arrived in Saigon, the Embassy had already protested to the *Globe* about me, largely because I had expressed anti-war opinions on Radio Hanoi. Unless Storin had been listening to that broadcast a month earlier, he had to rely on an Embassy monitored transcript.

If the *Globe* was not duped – and I never used the term – and if the Embassy did not "inspire" Storin's attack, then one is left to conclude that it was a conscious act carried out with the paper's editorial approval. If that's so, than we are led to ask more profound questions about the limits of "liberal" journalism in covering a revolutionary conflict like the Vietnam war.

And that is not "a trifle ridiculous."

Danny Schechter
Boston, Mass.

[THE POWER BROKER]

Editors:

I was interested to see Marshall Berman's review of "The Power Broker" (*Ramparts*, March 1975). I quite agree that we should analyze Moses not only as an enemy of the people, but also positively: how do we go about building great public works collectively, and with spirit? How did Moses plan and build Jones Beach? What were the relationships amongst the workers – the professionals and the tradesmen? How did they feel toward the project? Under what conditions did they take the initiative and feel pride in their work? How did the designs evolve?

Of course most of his projects were terribly destructive; but public works projects involving vast and intricate collective processes are not inevitably so: they can generate environments that are human and respectful of local conditions.

I was expecially delighted to see Berman's article in *Ramparts*. Over a century ago, people like Robert Owen, Fourier, St. Simon, Cabet, were trying to launch an approach to town planning that was at once critical, visionary and yet intensely practical. They were trying to show, with sometimes startling images, what transformations of the physical environment would be required to support a communitarian and socialist way of life. But this work was dismissed as "Utopian" by Marx and the Official Left, and its great potential for organizing social change was neglected. Indeed, were it not for certain works by relatively marginal community-anarchists – people like Kropotkin, William Morris, Eric Gill, Mumford and Paul Goodman – we would have lost touch entirely with this approach.

I see signs (like Berman's article) of new life for this tradition. Perhaps we can find some momentum here, and ground our critiques of those environments built by profiteers, bureaucrats, elite taste-makers and wage earners, in positive images: proposals for a new kind of public works, which show concretely how the environment could be made, and what it would be like, if our planning and building processes were centered in the human grain.

Murray Silverstein
Oakland, Calif.

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